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THE ENGLISH POEMS OF GEORGE HERBERT

THE ENGLISH POEMS OF GEORGE HERBERT

NEWLY ARRANGED IN RELATION TO HIS LIFE BY

GEORGE HERBERT PALMER

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge
1916

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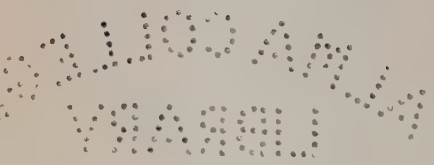

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GENERAL PREFACE

FOR poems so few as those of George Herbert, and of so intimate a nature, a small book is fitting. I once gave them enormous bulk. Bearing Herbert's name and studying him for half a lifetime, in 1905 I devoted thirteen hundred pages to telling the world what I thought of him.[1] A first volume contained all his English prose together with five long essays, discussing the circumstances of his life, his traits of character, the religious aims of his verse, its technical style, and a criticism of the two manuscripts which assure us of his text. A second volume held all his poems written before he took orders, and a third those after that long-deferred and climactic event. A new arrangement of the poems was the distinctive feature of my book. The traditional order was found by Nicholas Ferrar in the manuscript bequeathed to him by Herbert, a manuscript now known as the Bodleian. Ferrar followed it in printing his first edition of 1633, and up to 1905 its order was retained by all editors. In 1874, by a discovery of the late Dr. Grosart, a new and illuminating order became possible. He found in the Williams Library in Lon-

[1] *The English Works of George Herbert. Newly Arranged and Annotated and Considered in Relation to his Life.* By George Herbert Palmer. 3 vols. Second edition, revised. 1907. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston.

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don a second manuscript, largely in Herbert
hand, containing half the poems but showing many
variations from the Bodleian. In constructing h
own text Dr. Grosart chose from the two manu
scripts whatever reading pleased his taste. In th
fifth essay of my first volume I have presented th
reasons which convince me that the Williams
Manuscript antedates the Bodleian by about five
years. It shows, therefore, the state of Herbert
verse before he went to Bemerton and thus for th
first time supplies an instrument for sorting th
poems. While it does not enable us precisely t
date them, we can now part the scholar's writing
from those of the priest, and in each of the two re
sulting divisions traces can be found of facts in th
earlier and later life of Herbert. The poems I ac
cordingly arrange in twelve significant Groups
based partly on history, partly on subject-matter
and steadied throughout by manuscript authority
the reasons for each Group being stated in a brie
Preface. By this simple means a chaotic mass o
enigmatic verse is turned into a human docu
ment permeated with the life of a high-bred, hes
tating, intellectual, and consecrated soul.

But the elaborateness of that book brought m
a certain discontent. It revealed the new Herbe
to scholars but hid him from the general publi
to whom also I wish him known. How suitabl
might the groping man of to-day sympathiz
with the conflicting moods of one who heard an

veraciously recorded the calls of God, pleasure, choice society, high place, art, action, indolence! The double-mindedness of this stormy and introspective young man (cf. *The Answer*), too long mistaken for an aged and passionless saint, fits him peculiarly for companionship with our uncertain generation. But most friends of the spirit speak from a pocket volume. My god-father shall have one which will allow him to appeal, in all his complexity, across the centuries to us.

No English poems by Herbert were published during his life. That fact explains at once their difficulty and their worth. They are private and confessional writings, like the Portuguese Sonnets or those of Shakspere. They were composed for himself and not for the public, singularly truthful and artistic expressions of his many moods. In reading them one must imaginatively enter into Herbert's mind, while he takes no pains to ease the approach. For so independent a poet a commenting editor may do much. Desiring to make my early book a kind of encyclopædia of Herbert, I printed here a poem on each right page and reserved the entire left for a series of notes. These notes, occupying as much space as the text itself, cannot be reproduced here. But for their loss I offer a kind of compensation in the Prefaces to the twelve groups, which will at least show the significance of the poems which follow. In them too, and in the Table of Dates, the development of Herbert's life

is sketched so clearly as to make anything mor than a few remarks upon it unnecessary here.

Herbert was of aristocratic birth and tempe He came of a collateral branch of one of the oldes largest, and most influential families of Englan Its head was that William Herbert, Earl of Pem broke, to whom the first folio of Shakspere is ded cated and who has been believed — though not b me — to be the "Mr. W. H." of Shakspere's Son nets. His seat was Wilton House, near Salisbury about a mile distant from the village of Bemerton whose living he bestowed on his poet kinsman The castle of Sir Richard Herbert, George Her bert's father, was at Montgomery in Wales. Tha father dying early, the two persons who left th deepest mark on George Herbert were his master ful mother and Dr. John Donne, an intimate of th family, the Dean of St. Paul's, and the champio of a new school of intellectual poetry averse to th lulling strains of Spenser.

From the influence of these two persons spran the two controlling passions of Herbert's life bringing about his dedication in youth to th priesthood and to poetry. The former was due t his mother who, seeing that this one of her seve sons was of too feeble a constitution to follow th careers of his brothers in the army, the navy, th diplomatic or civil service, destined him for th church. That destination Herbert on the whol approved. He was of a genuinely devout dispos

ion and from earliest childhood intended to be-
ome a priest. But he was also a man of the
enaissance, delighting in all elegancies of scholar-
ip, speech, dress, in courtly manners and aristo-
atic society. He believed, whether rightly or
rongly, the two inclinations — the sacred and
he secular — to be antagonistic and the former
o be the voice of duty. Yet thirty-seven years he
ave to what he regarded as personal indulgence,
nd less than three to the service of the church.
is poems, he said on his deathbed, are "a picture
f the many spiritual conflicts that have past
etwixt God and my soul." The present arrange-
ent brings out this pathetic struggle as it has not
een seen before. A beginner who would quickly
me near to Herbert may well begin his reading
ith Group VI.

The influence of Dr. Donne appears in another
rly and slenderly fulfilled purpose. Herbert will
e a poet, a poet too of a new type. He will, of
ourse, sing of love but, devoting himself exclu-
vely to religious love, he will give it greater
nge, perfection, and ardor than went to the mak-
g of the fashionable and decadent love-poetry of
e time. This resolve he sets forth in the poems
Group I. But his mind was critical and fastidi-
us, not creative and abundant. Accordingly 169
ort poems, written and rewritten during up-
ards of twenty years, are his total product. Yet
is a product of great import for English poetry.

Herbert was about the first to perceive that poem should have solid structure. He knew when to stop. He supplies his pieces with a beginning, middle, and end. No superfluity enters into the unified form. Herbert, in short, is a conscious artist; and before his time literary artistry was little sought or understood. The mastery of firm poetic form is one of the distinctive contributions made by him to English verse.

A second is that to which I have already referred, the development of the religious love-lyric. Common enough to-day is poetry which speaks the vicissitudes of the individual soul seeking to yield itself to its divine lover. But we forget that it was Herbert who set the pattern of such poetry. With what truthful freshness too and precision does he utter his fervors! In his daring, picturesque, and condensed words we feel such power of the aphoristic phrase as was had previously only by his friend Lord Bacon or by Shakspere himself. Religious verse is seldom transparently sincere. The temptation is strong to say what is expected. But how convincingly, surprisingly, true are Herbert's lines! To use the test by which Mill distinguished poetry from eloquence, we rather over-hear than hear him. Whoever will once work his way into acquaintance with this strange poet will find him a perpetual friend, endowed with noble speech, exact and unusual thought, and a heartfelt, if humanly wayward, allegiance to God's insistent call.

DATES

593. Herbert born at Montgomery Castle.
597. Herbert's father dies and mother moves to Oxford.
603. James I King. Lady Herbert moves to London.
605. Herbert enters Westminster School.
609. Lady Herbert marries Sir John Danvers. Herbert enters Trinity College, Cambridge.
610. Herbert's two sonnets to his mother.
612. Herbert takes B.A. Degree and publishes two Latin poems on death of Prince Henry.
616. Herbert takes M.A. and is appointed Major Fellow of Trinity.
619. Herbert appointed Public Orator at Cambridge. Publishes Latin poem on death of Queen Anne.
623. Herbert receives from King the sinecure Lay Rectorship of Whitford. Publishes Latin Oration on reception of Buckingham.
625. King James dies. Bacon dedicates to Herbert certain psalms.
626. Herbert appointed Prebendary of Leighton in Lincolnshire. His Latin Poem on Bacon's death.

1627. Herbert's mother dies. He resigns Orato ship. His Latin *Parentalia* published.
1628. Williams Manuscript of Herbert's Poem probably written about this time.
1629. Herbert marries Jane Danvers.
1630. Herbert takes priest's orders and the Paris of Bemerton, Wiltshire.
1632. Herbert writes notes on Ferrar's translatio of Valdesso's *Considerations*.
1633. Death of Herbert at Bemerton. Ferra publishes *The Temple* at Cambridge.
1634. Cornaro's *Treatise on Temperance*, trans lated by Herbert; published.
1652. Herbert's *Remains*, containing his *Countr Parson* and *Jacula Prudentum*, published
1662. Herbert's early Latin poems, attacking An drew Melville, published.
1670. Izaak Walton's *Life of Herbert*, published.

CONTENTS

OUP		PAGE
	THE DEDICATION	xv
I.	THE CHURCH-PORCH	1
II.	THE RESOLVE	37
II.	THE CHURCH	59
V.	MEDITATION	109
V.	THE INNER LIFE	141
VI.	THE CRISIS	167
II.	THE HAPPY PRIEST	211
II.	BEMERTON STUDY	243
X.	RESTLESSNESS	295
X.	SUFFERING	333
XI.	DEATH	371
II.	ADDITIONAL AND DOUBTFUL POEMS	389
	INDEX OF TITLES	421
	INDEX OF FIRST LINES	423

THE DEDICATION

LORD, my first fruits present themselves to thee.
t not mine neither; for from thee they came,
nd must return. Accept of them and me,
nd make us strive who shall sing best thy name.
Turn their eyes hither who shall make a gain.
Theirs who shall hurt themselves or me, refrain.

I

THE CHURCH-PORCH

PREFACE

THE CHURCH-PORCH bears much the same relation to Herbert's other poetry as the Jewish sdom books — Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesicus, and Wisdom — bear to the Psalms and the ophets. There is little religion in it, but shrewd owledge of men, manners, and methods of winng eminence. It is a collection of wise saws and odern instances which speak of precedents and e best social usage. It is written by the friend of con, by the university courtier, the collector of overbs, the lover of a pregnant phrase. Its sagay of thought and expression, though strongly arked by the temper of its time, has, like the sdom of the Jews, held well the esteem of after es. Probably few parts of Herbert are less outown.

Its theme determines its position. Propriety, auty, good judgment, familiarity with the best stoms, always of high importance in Herbert's es, are here set forth as the suitable introduction religion, which itself lies beyond. This is the sigicance of the title, THE CHURCH-PORCH. Good eeding opens the door of the TEMPLE. Attention the refinements of life teaches the youth how to have himself in church. The results of Herbert's

secular experience, which he always professed wa
to prepare him for the priesthood, are here offere
to the young reader as his best preparation for th
spiritual fervors which follow. Purified of coarse
faults by good taste, he may become accessible t
the delicacies of divine love.

To this work of purification the enigmatic wor
refers which follows the title. *Perirrhanterium* i
the Greek term for a sprinkling instrument. A
the entrance of the church stands a basin of hol
water, placed there to remind the intending wor
shipper of his need of cleansing (Numbers viii, 7
and Hebrews x, 22). According to the warning i
SUPERLIMINARE, page 66, l. 2, he is fit to enter th
temple itself only after being properly sprinkle
at the entrance.

The style of THE CHURCH-PORCH, no less tha
the spiritual conditions displayed in it, connects i
with Herbert's earlier life. It contains no state
ment that its author is a priest, though he is deepl
interested in the priest's work and office. As it i
included in the Williams Manuscript, it must hav
been written before 1630. But how greatly it
author valued it, and how steadily he labored o
its improvement, is proved by the multitude o
changes, great and slight, which were introduce
during the Bemerton years. Few of Herbert
poems show so large a difference between the
earlier and their later forms.

The processes of alteration in THE CHURCH

ORCH which went on during the last half-dozen ars of Herbert's life are instructive as regards the iginal methods of its composition. Probably ritten piecemeal and not produced during any sin- e year, it possesses little organic unity. Its many emes might be increased, diminished, or trans- osed without injury to the plan. Why should a ngle stanza on lying stand between considerable scussions of swearing and of idleness? Why ould the precepts on eating be parted from those drinking? Or stanzas so similar as the eleventh d fortieth be widely removed? Or a single stanza conversation be introduced between gambling d self-restraint, while the general discussion of e subject follows fourteen stanzas later? Many ch incongruities occur, a fact the more noticeable d the more likely to be connected with temporal uses because Herbert's artistic sense when exer- sed on a small scale usually secures great firmness form. That THE CHURCH-PORCH, however, es not altogether lack plan is remarked by G. yley, who quaintly writes:

"With his *Perirrhanterium* Herbert takes care sprinkle handfuls of advice to them that will to church. These he throws out under four ads.

(1) Ethics or personal duties, l. 1–150.
(2) Œconomics or family duties, l. 151–204.
(3) Politics or Sociable Maxims, l. 205–384.
(4) Lastly he comes to scatter a handful or

two of Ecclesiastics or Church Duties, l. 385–end." [1]

The piece begins with the ruder sins and advances to the niceties of worship, the instructions about public worship being more coherent than any other part of the poem. These may have been written last, when Herbert's long interest in the priesthood was approaching a decision. In short, the style and texture of the poem indicate that it was begun early, that it grew by accretion rather than construction, and that it never in its author's mind was altogether finished.

How early it was begun seems hinted in The Dedication. This solitary stanza stands to The Church-Porch in about the same relation as the Envoy to The Church Militant. While not exactly a part of the poem, the poem would be incomplete without it, and it would be fragmentary without The Church-Porch. It is written to introduce something. And while what it introduces includes more than The Church-Porch, it is with

[1] This and many subsequent quotations are taken from a manuscript of four hundred pages, written by a certain George Ryley in 1714 and now in the Bodleian Library. Of Ryley's history nothing is known. His volume forms an elaborate commentary on Herbert's poems, in which they are all passed in review and expounded with reference to their religious import. Ryley's aims and my own are so divergent that I have been able to quote him less often than I should like, especially as I obtained a copy of his manuscript only after my notes were practically complete.

this that THE DEDICATION primarily joins itself, being identical with it in sententious metre. Accordingly, though in the Bodleian Manuscript it is printed on the title-page, in Ferrar's Edition and in the Williams Manuscript it stands on a leaf by itself just before THE CHURCH-PORCH, which it serves as a kind of antecedent stanza. When this connection is once recognized, its mention of *first fruits* becomes significant.

In 1613 Herbert contributed two Latin poems to the Cambridge Elegies on the death of Prince Henry, and in 1619 a Latin poem to the Elegies on Queen Anne. His ANGLI MUSAE RESPONSORIAE, or reply to Melville, had long been in circulation. In 1623 he printed his Latin Oration on the return from Spain of Prince Charles and Buckingham. Would the phrase *first fruits* naturally have been used after so many publications? It is clear (p. 45) that by 1610 Herbert had formed a resolution to consecrate all his abilities in poetry to God's glory. Between this date and 1613 I think THE DEDICATION was most probably drawn up, the metre of THE CHURCH-PORCH selected, and the poem itself at least begun. The large amount of secular matter, the borrowed and regular measure, and the hortatory style — peculiarities absent from Herbert's other work — suggest an early date.

A comparison of THE CHURCH-PORCH with Herbert's other long poems, THE CHURCH MILITANT and THE SACRIFICE, throws light on the character

of each and fixes the place of each in the collection. The Church Militant, in both manuscripts and in Ferrar's original edition, stands at the close, appearing there almost as an independent work. The preceding poems are separated from it by the word *Finis* and a Gloria. In order not to break the continuity of the lyric verse, I retain this late position of The Church Militant, though I believe it to be one of the very earliest of Herbert's poems. Substantially also I keep the positions of the other two unchanged; for dissimilar as is The Sacrifice from everything else Herbert wrote, it is not, like The Church Militant, a detachable piece. In its elaborate display of the forthgoing love of God and the averseness of man, it is plainly intended as the natural presupposition and starting-point of all the subsequent verse. I respect this intention and keep its priority unchanged. To devise another position for The Church-Porch is obviously impossible.

It may not be fanciful, however, to find the distinctive character of these three poems in their personal pronouns. Each has one peculiar to itself. That of The Church Militant is the third, *he* or *it;* for this poem alone is descriptive and historical. The pronoun of The Sacrifice is *I*, a word which gives color to nearly all of Herbert's verse, but has here a unique employment. It is used as the pronoun of a monologue, of Herbert's single attempt at sustained dramatic speech. The pronoun of

THE CHURCH-PORCH is announced in its first word, *Thou*, this being the only occasion on which Herbert attempts a piece of instruction. CHARMS AND KNOTS and CONSTANCIE are similar in substance, but the form of direct address is not employed. *Thou* appears not infrequently in Herbert's other poems. But elsewhere it marks the address of the writer to himself or to God. It is a part of that inner communion so characteristic of THE TEMPLE, an appeal to the worser self by the better, and not, as in the case of THE CHURCH-PORCH, an exhortation addressed to some one standing by.

The metre of THE CHURCH-PORCH is the same as that used in SINNES ROUND, page 283, and, with a peculiar adaptation of the final line, in THE WATERCOURSE, page 284. The metre was a favorite one in Herbert's time. It had already been employed by Sidney in some of the songs of his Arcadia; by Spenser in Astrophel, The Ruines of Time, and in two sections of The Shepherd's Calendar; by Shakespeare in Venus and Adonis; and more frequently than any other metre by Southwell. It appears also in Breton, Lord Brooke, Campion, Donne, Drummond, Lord Herbert, Overbury, Quarles, and Wither. It generally serves these writers as a metre of instruction.

THE CHURCH-PORCH

PERIRRHANTERIUM

I

Thou whose sweet youth and early hopes inhance
  Thy rate and price, and mark thee for a treasure,
Hearken unto a Verser, who may chance
  Ryme thee to good, and make a bait of pleasure.
A verse may finde him who a sermon flies,
And turn delight into a sacrifice.

II

Beware of lust: it doth pollute and foul
  Whom God in Baptisme washt with his own blood.
It blots thy lesson written in thy soul;
  The holy lines cannot be understood.
How dare those eyes upon a Bible look,
Much lesse towards God, whose lust is all their book?

III

Abstain wholly, or wed. Thy bounteous Lord
Allows thee choise of paths. Take no by-wayes,
But gladly welcome what he doth afford;
Not grudging that thy lust hath bounds and staies.
Continence hath his joy. Weigh both; and so
If rottennesse have more, let Heaven go.

IV

If God had laid all common, certainly
Man would have been th' incloser; but since now
God hath impal'd us, on the contrarie
Man breaks the fence and every ground will plough.
O what were man might he himself misplace!
Sure, to be crosse, he would shift feet and face.

V

Drink not the third glasse, which thou canst not tame
When once it is within thee; but before,
Mayst rule it as thou list and poure the shame,
Which it would poure on thee, upon the floore.
It is most just to throw that on the ground
Which would throw me there, if I keep the round.

VI

He that is drunken may his mother kill,
Bigge with his sister. He hath lost the reins,
Is outlawd by himself. All kinde of ill
Did with his liquour slide into his veins.
The drunkard forfets Man, and doth devest
All worldly right save what he hath by beast.

VII

Shall I, to please another's wine-sprung minde,
Lose all mine own? God hath giv'n me a measure
Short of his canne and bodie. Must I finde
A pain in that wherein he findes a pleasure?
Stay at the third glasse. If thou lose thy hold,
Then thou art modest, and the wine grows bold.

VIII

If reason move not Gallants, quit the room,
(All in a shipwrack shift their severall way,)
Let not a common ruine thee intombe.
Be not a beast in courtesie. But stay,
Stay at the third cup, or forego the place.
Wine above all things doth God's stamp deface.

IX

Yet if thou sinne in wine or wantonnesse,
Boast not thereof nor make thy shame thy glorie.
Frailtie gets pardon by submissivenesse;
But he that boasts shuts that out of his storie.
He makes flat warre with God, and doth defie
With his poore clod of earth the spacious sky.

X

Take not his name, who made thy mouth, in vain:
It gets thee nothing, and hath no excuse.
Lust and wine plead a pleasure, avarice gain:
But the cheap swearer through his open sluce
Lets his soul runne for nought, as little fearing.
Were I an *Epicure*, I could bate swearing.

XI

When thou dost tell another's jest, therein
Omit the oathes, which true wit cannot need.
Pick out of tales the mirth, but not the sinne.
He pares his apple that will cleanly feed.
Play not away the vertue of that name
Which is thy best stake when griefs make thee tame.

XII

The cheapest sinnes most dearely punisht are,
  Because to shun them also is so cheap;
For we have wit to mark them, and to spare.
  O crumble not away thy soul's fair heap.
If thou wilt die, the gates of hell are broad;
Pride and full sinnes have made the way a road.

XIII

Lie not; but let thy heart be true to God,
  Thy mouth to it, thy actions to them both.
Cowards tell lies, and those that fear the rod;
  The stormie working soul spits lies and froth.
Dare to be true. Nothing can need a ly.
A fault which needs it most grows two thereby.

XIV

Flie idlenesse; which yet thou canst not flie
  By dressing, mistressing, and complement.
If those take up thy day, the sunne will crie
  Against thee; for his light was onely lent.
God gave thy soul brave wings; put not those feathers
Into a bed, to sleep out all ill weathers.

XV

Art thou a Magistrate? Then be severe.
If studious, copie fair what time hath blurr'd;
Redeem truth from his jawes. If souldier,
Chase brave employments with a naked sword
Throughout the world. Fool not: for all may have,
If they dare try, a glorious life or grave.

XVI

O England! full of sinne, but most of sloth,
Spit out thy flegme and fill thy brest with glorie.
Thy Gentrie bleats, as if thy native cloth
Transfus'd a sheepishnesse into thy storie.
Not that they all are so; but that the most
Are gone to grasse and in the pasture lost.

XVII

This losse springs chiefly from our education.
Some till their ground, but let weeds choke their sonne;
Some mark a partridge, never their childe's fashion;
Some ship them over, and the thing is done.
Studie this art, make it thy great designe;
And if God's image move thee not, let thine.

XVIII

Some great estates provide, but doe not breed
A mast'ring minde; so both are lost thereby.
Or els they breed them tender, make them need
All that they leave; this is flat povertie.
For he that needs five thousand pound to live
Is full as poore as he that needs but five.

XIX

The way to make thy sonne rich is to fill
His minde with rest before his trunk with riches.
For wealth without contentment climbes a hill
To feel those tempests which fly over ditches.
But if thy sonne can make ten pound his measure,
Then all thou addest may be call'd his treasure.

XX

When thou dost purpose ought, (within thy power,)
Be sure to doe it, though it be but small.
Constancie knits the bones and makes us stowre
When wanton pleasures becken us to thrall.
Who breaks his own bond forfeiteth himself.
What nature made a ship he makes a shelf.

XXI

Doe all things like a man, not sneakingly.
Think the king sees thee still; for his King does.
Simpring is but a lay-hypocrisie:
Give it a corner, and the clue undoes.
Who fears to do ill, sets himself to task;
Who fears to do well, sure should wear a mask.

XXII

Look to thy mouth; diseases enter there.
Thou hast two sconses if thy stomack call:
Carve, or discourse. Do not a famine fear.
Who carves, is kind to two; who talks, to all.
Look on meat, think it dirt, then eat a bit;
And say withall, Earth to earth I commit.

XXIII

Slight those who say amidst their sickly healths,
Thou liv'st by rule. What doth not so but man?
Houses are built by rule, and common-wealths.
Entice the trusty sunne, if that you can,
From his Ecliptick line; becken the skie.
Who lives by rule, then, keeps good companie.

XXIV

Who keeps no guard upon himself is slack,
And rots to nothing at the next great thaw.
Man is a shop of rules, a well truss'd pack,
Whose every parcell under-writes a law.
Lose not thy self, nor give thy humours way;
God gave them to thee under lock and key.

XXV

By all means use sometimes to be alone.
Salute thy self, see what thy soul doth wear.
Dare to look in thy chest, for 't is thine own,
And tumble up and down what thou find'st there.
Who cannot rest till hee good fellows finde,
He breaks up house, turns out of doores his minde.

XXVI

Be thriftie, but not covetous; therefore give
Thy need, thine honour, and thy friend his due.
Never was scraper brave man. Get to live;
Then live, and use it. Els, it is not true
That thou hast gotten. Surely use alone
Makes money not a contemptible stone.

XXVII

Never exceed thy income. Youth may make
Ev'n with the yeare; but age, if it will hit,
Shoots a bow short, and lessens still his stake
As the day lessens, and his life with it.
Thy children, kindred, friends upon thee call;
Before thy journey fairly part with all.

XXVIII

Yet in thy thriving still misdoubt some evil;
Lest gaining gain on thee, and make thee dimme
To all things els. Wealth is the conjurer's devil;
Whom when he thinks he hath, the devil hath him.
Gold thou mayst safely touch; but if it stick
Unto thy hands, it woundeth to the quick.

XXIX

What skills it if a bag of stones or gold
About thy neck do drown thee? Raise thy head,
Take starres for money; starres not to be told
By any art, yet to be purchased.
None is so wastefull as the scraping dame.
She loseth three for one: her soul, rest, fame.

XXX

By no means runne in debt. Take thine own measure.
Who cannot live on twentie pound a yeare
Cannot on fourtie; he's a man of pleasure,
A kinde of thing that's for it self too deare.
The curious unthrift makes his cloth too wide,
And spares himself, but would his taylor chide.

XXXI

Spend not on hopes. They that by pleading clothes
Do fortunes seek, when worth and service fail,
Would have their tale beleeved for their oathes,
And are like empty vessels under sail.
Old courtiers know this; therefore set out so
As all the day thou mayst hold out to go.

XXXII

In clothes, cheap handsomenesse doth bear the bell.
Wisedome's a trimmer thing then shop e're gave.
Say not then, This with that lace will do well;
But, This with my discretion will be brave.
Much curiousnesse is a perpetuall wooing,
Nothing with labour, folly long a doing.

XXXIII

Play not for gain, but sport. Who playes for more
Then he can lose with pleasure, stakes his heart;
Perhaps his wive's too, and whom she hath bore;
Servants and churches also play their part.
Onely a herauld, who that way doth passe,
Findes his crackt name at length in the church-glasse.

XXXIV

If yet thou love game at so deere a rate,
Learn this, that hath old gamesters deerely cost:
Dost lose? Rise up. Dost winne? Rise in that state.
Who strive to sit out losing hands, are lost.
Game is a civil gunpowder, in peace
Blowing up houses with their whole increase.

XXXV

In conversation boldnesse now bears sway.
But know that nothing can so foolish be
As empty boldnesse. Therefore first assay
To stuffe thy minde with solid braverie,
Then march on gallant. Get substantiall worth.
Boldnesse guilds finely and will set it forth.

XXXVI

Be sweet to all. Is thy complexion sowre?
Then keep such companie, make them thy allay.
Get a sharp wife, a servant that will lowre.
A stumbler stumbles least in rugged way.
Command thy self in chief. He life's warre knows
Whom all his passions follow as he goes.

XXXVII

Catch not at quarrels. He that dares not speak
Plainly and home is coward of the two.
Think not thy fame at ev'ry twitch will break.
By great deeds shew that thou canst little do,
And do them not. That shall thy wisdome be,
And change thy temperance into braverie.

XXXVIII

If that thy fame with ev'ry toy be pos'd,
'T is a thinne webbe, which poysonous fancies make.
But the great souldier's honour was compos'd
Of thicker stuffe, which would endure a shake.
Wisdome picks friends; civilitie playes the rest.
A toy shunn'd cleanly passeth with the best.

XXXIX

Laugh not too much. The wittie man laughs least;
For wit is newes onely to ignorance.
Lesse at thine own things laugh; lest in the jest
Thy person share, and the conceit advance.
Make not thy sport, abuses; for the fly
That feeds on dung is coloured thereby.

XL

Pick out of mirth, like stones out of thy ground,
Profanenesse, filthinesse, abusivenesse.
These are the scumme with which course wits abound.
The fine may spare these well, yet not go lesse.
All things are bigge with jest; nothing that's plain
But may be wittie if thou hast the vein.

XLI

Wit's an unruly engine, wildly striking
Sometimes a friend, sometimes the engineer.
Hast thou the knack? Pamper it not with liking;
But if thou want it, buy it not too deere.
Many, affecting wit beyond their power,
Have got to be a deare fool for an houre.

XLII

A sad wise valour is the brave complexion
That leads the van and swallows up the cities.
The gigler is a milk-maid, whom infection
Or a fir'd beacon frighteth from his ditties.
Then he's the sport; the mirth then in him rests,
And the sad man is cock of all his jests.

XLIII

Towards great persons use respective boldnesse.
That temper gives them theirs, and yet doth take
Nothing from thine. In service, care or coldnesse
Doth ratably thy fortunes marre or make.
Feed no man in his sinnes; for adulation
Doth make thee parcell-devil in damnation.

XLIV

Envie not greatnesse; for thou mak'st thereby
Thy self the worse, and so the distance greater.
Be not thine own worm. Yet such jealousie
As hurts not others, but may make thee better,
Is a good spurre. Correct thy passions' spite;
Then may the beasts draw thee to happy light.

XLV

When basenesse is exalted, do not bate
The place its honour for the person's sake.
The shrine is that which thou dost venerate,
And not the beast that bears it on his back.
I care not though the cloth of state should be
Not of rich arras, but mean tapestrie.

XLVI

Thy friend put in thy bosome; wear his eies
Still in thy heart that he may see what's there.
If cause require, thou art his sacrifice;
Thy drops of bloud must pay down all his fear.
But love is lost, the way of friendship's gone,
Though *David* had his *Jonathan*, *Christ* his *John*.

XLVII

Yet be not surety if thou be a father.
Love is a personall debt. I cannot give
My children's right, nor ought he take it. Rather
Both friends should die then hinder them to live.
Fathers first enter bonds to nature's ends,
And are her sureties ere they are a friend's.

XLVIII

If thou be single, all thy goods and ground
Submit to love; but yet not more then all.
Give one estate, as one life. None is bound
To work for two, who brought himself to thrall.
God made me one man; love makes me no more,
Till labour come and make my weaknesse score.

XLIX

In thy discourse, if thou desire to please,
All such is courteous, usefull, new, or wittie.
Usefulnesse comes by labour, wit by ease,
Courtesie grows in court, news in the citie.
Get a good stock of these, then draw the card
That suites him best of whom thy speech is heard.

L

Entice all neatly to what they know best;
For so thou dost thy self and him a pleasure.
But a proud ignorance will lose his rest
Rather then shew his cards. Steal from his treasure
What to ask further. Doubts well rais'd do lock
The speaker to thee and preserve thy stock.

LI

If thou be Master-gunner, spend not all
That thou canst speak at once; but husband it,
And give men turns of speech. Do not forestall
By lavishnesse thine own and others' wit,
As if thou mad'st thy will. A civil guest
Will no more talk all, then eat all, the feast.

LII

Be calm in arguing; for fiercenesse makes
Errour a fault, and truth discourtesie.
Why should I feel another man's mistakes
More then his sicknesses or povertie?
In love I should; but anger is not love,
Nor wisdome neither. Therefore gently move.

LIII

Calmnesse is great advantage. He that lets
Another chafe may warm him at his fire,
Mark all his wandrings, and enjoy his frets;
As cunning fencers suffer heat to tire.
Truth dwels not in the clouds; the bow that's there
Doth often aim at, never hit the sphere.

LIV

Mark what another sayes; for many are
Full of themselves and answer their own notion.
Take all into thee; then with equall care
Ballance each dramme of reason, like a potion.
If truth be with thy friend, be with them both;
Share in the conquest and confesse a troth.

LV

Be usefull where thou livest, that they may
Both want and wish thy pleasing presence still.
Kindnesse, good parts, great places are the way
To compasse this. Finde out men's wants and will,
And meet them there. All worldly joyes go lesse
To the one joy of doing kindnesses.

LVI

Sitch thy behaviour low, thy projects high;
So shalt thou humble and magnanimous be.
Sink not in spirit. Who aimeth at the sky
Shoots higher much then he that means a tree.
A grain of glorie mixt with humblenesse
Cures both a fever and lethargicknesse.

LVII

Let thy minde still be bent still plotting where,
And when, and how the businesse may be done.
Slacknesse breeds worms; but the sure traveller,
Though he alight sometimes, still goeth on.
Active and stirring spirits live alone.
Write on the others, Here lies such a one.

LVIII

Slight not the smallest losse, whether it be
In love or honour, take account of all.
Shine like the sunne in every corner. See
Whether thy stock of credit swell or fall.
Who say, I care not, those I give for lost;
And to instruct them, 't will not quit the cost.

LIX

Scorn no man's love, though of a mean degree;
(Love is a present for a mightie king)
Much lesse make any one thine enemie.
As gunnes destroy, so may a little sling.
The cunning workman never doth refuse
The meanest tool that he may chance to use.

LX

All forrain wisdome doth amount to this,
To take all that is given: whether wealth,
Or love, or language; nothing comes amisse.
A good digestion turneth all to health.
And then as farre as fair behaviour may,
Strike off all scores; none are so cleare as they.

LXI

Keep all thy native good and naturalize
All forrain of that name, but scorn their ill:
Embrace their activenesse, not vanities.
Who follows all things forfeiteth his will.
If thou observest strangers in each fit,
In time they'l runne thee out of all thy wit.

LXII

Affect in things about thee cleanlinesse,
That all may gladly board thee, as a flowre.
Slovens take up their stock of noisomnesse
Beforehand, and anticipate their last houre.
Let thy minde's sweetnesse have his operation
Upon thy body, clothes, and habitation.

LXIII

In Almes regard thy means and others' merit.
Think heav'n a better bargain then to give
Onely thy single market-money for it.
Joyn hands with God to make a man to live.
Give to all something; to a good poore man,
Till thou change names and be where he began.

LXIV

Man is God's image, but a poore man is
Christ's stamp to boot; both images regard.
God reckons for him, counts the favour his.
Write, So much giv'n to God; thou shalt be heard.
Let thy almes go before and keep heav'n's gate
Open for thee, or both may come too late.

LXV

Restore to God his due in tithe and time.
A tithe purloin'd cankers the whole estate.
Sundaies observe: think when the bells do chime,
'T is angels' musick; therefore come not late.
God then deals blessings. If a king did so,
Who would not haste, nay give, to see the show?

LXVI

Twice on the day his due is understood;
For all the week thy food so oft he gave thee.
Thy cheere is mended; bate not of the food
Because 't is better, and perhaps may save thee.
Thwart not th' Almighty God. O be not crosse!
Fast when thou wilt; but then 't is gain, not losse.

LXVII

Though private prayer be a brave designe,
Yet publick hath more promises, more love;
And love's a weight to hearts, to eies a signe.
We all are but cold suitours; let us move
Where it is warmest. Leave thy six and seven;
Pray with the most: for where most pray is heaven.

LXVIII

When once thy foot enters the church, be bare.
God is more there then thou: for thou art there
Onely by his permission. Then beware,
And make thy self all reverence and fear.
Kneeling ne're spoil'd silk stocking. Quit thy state.
All equall are within the churches gate.

LXIX

Resort to sermons, but to prayers most:
Praying's the end of preaching. O be drest,
Stay not for th' other pin. Why thou hast lost
A joy for it worth worlds. Thus hell doth jest
Away thy blessings, and extreamly flout thee;
Thy clothes being fast, but thy soul loose about thee.

LXX

In time of service seal up both thine eies,
And send them to thine heart; that spying sinne,
They may weep out the stains by them did rise.
Those doores being shut, all by the eare comes in.
Who marks in church-time others' symmetrie,
Makes all their beautie his deformitie.

LXXI

Let vain or busie thoughts have there no part:
Bring not thy plough, thy plots, thy pleasures thither.
Christ purg'd his temple; so must thou thy heart.
All worldly thoughts are but theeves met together
To couzin thee. Look to thy actions well:
For churches are either our heav'n or hell.

LXXII

Judge not the preacher; for he is thy Judge.
If thou mislike him, thou conceiv'st him not.
God calleth preaching folly. Do not grudge
To pick out treasures from an earthen pot.
The worst speak something good; if all want sense,
God takes a text and preacheth patience.

LXXIII

He that gets patience, and the blessing which
Preachers conclude with, hath not lost his pains.
He that by being at church escapes the ditch,
Which he might fall in by companions, gains.
He that loves God's abode, and to combine
With saints on earth, shall one day with them shine.

LXXIV

Jest not at preachers' language or expression.
How know'st thou but thy sinnes made him miscarrie?
Then turn thy faults and his into confession.
God sent him, whatsoe're he be. O tarry,
And love him for his Master. His condition,
Though it be ill, makes him no ill Physician.

LXXV

None shall in hell such bitter pangs endure,
As those who mock at God's way of salvation.
Whom oil and balsames kill, what salve can cure?
They drink with greedinesse a full damnation.
The Jews refused thunder; and we, folly.
Though God do hedge us in, yet who is holy?

LXXVI

Summe up at night what thou hast done by day;
And in the morning, what thou hast to do.
Dresse and undresse thy soul: mark the decay
And growth of it; if with thy watch, that too
Be down, then winde up both. Since we shall be
Most surely judg'd, make thy accounts agree.

LXXVII

In brief, acquit thee bravely; play the man.
Look not on pleasures as they come, but go.
Deferre not the least vertue. Life's poore span
Make not an ell by trifling in thy wo.
If thou do ill, the joy fades, not the pains:
If well, the pain doth fade, the joy remains.

II

THE RESOLVE

PREFACE

THE poems of this fundamental Group announce the resolve of Herbert to become a poet, and state certain ends which he desires his poetry to accomplish. He will antagonize the love-poets of his day, employing against them, however, all their own vigorous intellectuality, passionate enthusiasm, and technical resource. All poetry has the single theme of love, but hitherto poets have misconceived it. They belittle love by *parselling it out*, erroneously confining it to the petty relations of men and women. It shall be Herbert's task to set it forth in its native fulness, and to reveal it as a world-principle, working on an infinite scale and drawing together God and man.

The conception of love here advocated is substantially that set forth by Plato in his Lysis, Phaedrus, and Symposium. Adopted by the Neo-Platonists, it influenced through them many of the Church Fathers. During the Renaissance it gained a wider currency through Ficinus' Latin translations of Plato, through his commentary on Plato's Symposium, and especially through its eloquent presentation in the fourth Book of Castiglione's Courtier. French poetry became affected by it. The group of writers who gathered about Sir

Philip Sidney, and who looked to France and Italy for inspiration, took it up. Spenser, employing it to some extent in The Faerie Queene, gave it magnificent expression in his Hymns in Honour of Love and Beauty. During the first half of the seventeenth century Platonism through all its teachings entered profoundly into English thought. At the University, just after Herbert's time, there was formed a considerable group of Cambridge Platonists, of whom Henry More and Ralph Cudworth are the best known. One of the later members of this company, and a successor of Herbert in the Bemerton Rectory, John Norris, in his Essay on Love and his translation of Waring's Picture of Love, gave in beautiful English prose an elaborate exposition of Platonic love. A copy of this latter book (4th edition, 1744) is in my possession which once belonged to R. W. Emerson, and was given by him to a philosophic friend. It may be, therefore, that Emerson's Essay on Love, one of the best modern statements of the Platonic doctrine, received contributions from Bemerton itself.

In brief, Plato taught that love is our passion for unity, for wholeness. As Love inspires our search, so does Beauty make known its end. For wherever in nature we catch glimpses of harmonious adjustment, the wholeness there suggested affects us as beautiful and prompts us to approach. Following the clue of Beauty, then, we may say that Love directs every rational life. Originally

one with God, with the universe, and with one another, we find ourselves now in the present world detached and fragmentary. Feeling this fragmentariness, as the wise unceasingly do, we are horror-stricken and lonely. We long for supplementation. We turn to the objects around us, and especially to one another, to obtain that wholeness which we feel ourselves to lack. To our eyes those we love are always beautiful, and we are restlessly eager to join them. Yet such lesser unions continually bring disappointment and a new sense of incompleteness. Their little wholenesses are, after all, but fragmentary, their function being to disclose the necessity of the one ultimate and only adequate wholeness. In reality there can be but one, that which is found in union with Goodness, God, the Ideal, Heavenly Beauty, that Love which is the *authour of this great frame*. Truly to love is to look through all else to Him.

We must, then, clear away the special conditions under which Love first appears, if we would rise to a knowledge of its nature. "The eye of Love," says Emerson in one of his letters, "falls on some mortal form, but it rests not a moment there. As every leaf represents to us all vegetable nature, so Love looks through that spotted blighted form to the vast spiritual element of which it was created and which it represents." When Love is true to itself as the passion for perfection, it continually supersedes its lower forms in the interest of what is

larger. None of these inferior forms is so obscuring, so little regardful of anything beyond itself, as that instinctive passion between the sexes which tries to monopolize the name of Love. Friendship is more intelligent. Unities of a still wider and firmer kind are disclosed in the social, artistic, and scientific impulses. These are all prompted by Love and follow increasing grades of Beauty. Religion, however, alone reveals the full significance of these struggles toward conjunction; for God is the only complete wholeness, and every endeavor to unite with other things or persons is but a blind seeking after Him.

Plato's doctrine of love has many aspects, which variously influenced other English poets. I develop here only that quantitative presentation of it which peculiarly appealed to Herbert's practical and non-mystical mind. In this Group of poems he applies the doctrine as he understands it, resolving to devote himself to abolishing love's blindness. Like all poets he will sing of love, but not of that fettering attachment to particular persons which is miscalled by its great name. Even in his two youthful sonnets he has discovered the emptiness and necessary artificiality of this. The theme of all his verse shall be the striving of the soul after union with God, who is conceived as a definite detached person hostile to subordinate manifestations of himself. This all-excluding devotion to God Herbert carefully expounds in the two sonnets

on LOVE; defends it against the love-poets in the first JORDAN; in the second JORDAN sees that his own exuberant disposition exposes him to the very errors he is fighting; calls for divine aid in PRAISE; acknowledges in THE QUIDDITIE how little he can effect; encourages himself in THE ELIXER by recalling Love's transforming power; in EMPLOYMENT guards against sluggishness; and in ANTIPHON joins with men and angels in adoration. In this Group of poems we have, therefore, the announcement of a poetical programme. How long it remained near Herbert's heart may be read later in DULNESSE, THE FORERUNNERS, LIFE, and THE FLOWER; where, feeling death approach, he reviews his campaign against the love-poets and mourns that his beautiful weapons must be laid aside.

Similar protests against the tendency of poetry to find love in sexual conditions rather than in rational or divine are not uncommon in the Jacobean poetry, and even in the later Elizabethan. Spenser himself had uttered them in the Preface to his Hymns in Honour of Heavenly Love and Beauty. So had Herbert's special master, Donne, in his Divine Sonnets and elsewhere. Just after Herbert's death, and partly through his influence, Platonic love became so fashionable as itself to awaken protest. Herbert, then, cannot be called the first to set heavenly love in contrast to earthly. He merely treated the antagonism with peculiar

precision and persistency, gave it the special turn which gained acceptance, and used it as did no other poet to inform the total body of his work.

It may be interesting to notice how different a conclusion a grave and passionate poet of recent years, Coventry Patmore, has drawn from the same Platonic premises. All Patmore's poetry, like that of Herbert, is a study of love. Love, too, in his view is not many but one, human loves being partial embodiments of a single divine principle. But while Herbert rejects the human loves as partial, Patmore, just because they are small embodiments, reverences them as our appointed means of approaching God. If, then, we call the tendency of Herbert Abstract Monotheism, because it sets in sharp and antagonistic contrast infinite and finite love, we might name that of Patmore a kind of Henotheism; since it finds a particular finite object needful if we would apprehend the universally divine. From the extreme and desolating consequences of his doctrine Herbert is saved by his rich Elizabethan temperament.

TWO SONNETS

TO HIS MOTHER

I [1610]

My God, where is that antient heat towards thee
Wherewith whole shoals of Martyrs once did burn,
Besides their other flames? Doth Poetry
Wear Venus' livery, only serve her turn?
Why are not Sonnets made of thee, and layes
Upon thine Altar burnt? Cannot thy love
Heighten a spirit to sound out thy praise
As well as any she? Cannot thy Dove
Outstrip their Cupid easily in flight?
Or, since thy ways are deep and still the same,
Will not a verse run smooth that bears thy name?
Why doth that fire, which by thy power and might
Each breast does feel, no braver fuel choose
Than that which one day Worms may chance refuse?

II

Sure, Lord, there is enough in thee to dry
Oceans of Ink; for as the Deluge did
Cover the Earth, so doth thy Majesty;
Each cloud distils thy praise, and doth forbid
Poets to turn it to another use.
Roses and Lilies speak thee; and to make
A pair of Cheeks of them, is thy abuse.
Why should I Women's eyes for Chrystal take?
Such poor invention burns in their low mind
Whose fire is wild, and doth not upward go
To praise, and on thee, Lord, some ink bestow
Open the bones, and you shall nothing find
In the best face but filth; when Lord, in Thee
The beauty lies in the discovery.

LOVE

I

Immortall Love, authour of this great frame,
Sprung from that beautie which can never fade,
How hath man parcel'd out thy glorious name
And thrown it on that dust which thou hast made,
While mortall love doth all the title gain!
Which siding with invention, they together
Bear all the sway, possessing heart and brain,
(Thy workmanship) and give thee share in neither.
Wit fancies beautie, beautie raiseth wit.
The world is theirs; they two play out the game,
Thou standing by. And though thy glorious name
Wrought our deliverance from th' infernall pit,
Who sings thy praise? Onely a skarf or glove
Doth warm our hands and make them write of love.

II

Immortall Heat, O let thy greater flame
  Attract the lesser to it! Let those fires,
  Which shall consume the world, first make it tame,
And kindle in our hearts such true desires
As may consume our lusts and make thee way.
  Then shall our hearts pant thee; then shall our brain
  All her invention on thine Altar lay,
And there in hymnes send back thy fire again.
Our eies shall see thee, which before saw dust,
  Dust blown by wit till that they both were blinde.
  Thou shalt recover all thy goods in kinde,
Who wert disseized by usurping lust.
  All knees shall bow to thee; all wit shall rise
  And praise him who did make and mend our eies.

JORDAN

Who sayes that fictions onely and false hair
Become a verse? Is there in truth no beautie?
Is all good structure in a winding stair?
May no lines passe except they do their dutie
Not to a true, but painted chair?

Is it no verse except enchanted groves
And sudden arbours shadow course-spunne lines?
Must purling streams refresh a lover's loves?
Must all be vail'd, while he that reades divines,
Catching the sense at two removes?

Shepherds are honest people; let them sing,
Riddle who list for me, and pull for Prime.
I envie no man's nightingale or spring;
Nor let them punish me with losse of ryme,
Who plainly say, *My God, My King.*

JORDAN

When first my lines of heav'nly joyes made mention,
Such was their lustre, they did so excell,
That I sought out quaint words and trim invention;
My thoughts began to burnish, sprout, and swell,
Curling with metaphors a plain intention,
Decking the sense as if it were to sell.

Thousands of notions in my brain did runne,
Off'ring their service, if I were not sped.
I often blotted what I had begunne;
This was not quick enough, and that was dead.
Nothing could seem too rich to clothe the sunne,
Much lesse those joyes which trample on his head.

As flames do work and winde when they ascend,
So did I weave my self into the sense.
But while I bustled, I might heare a friend
Whisper, *How wide is all this long pretence!*
There is in love a sweetnesse readie penn'd;
Copie out onely that, and save expense.

PRAISE

To write a verse or two is all the praise
That I can raise.
Mend my estate in any wayes,
Thou shalt have more.

I go to Church; help me to wings, and I
Will thither flie.
Or, if I mount unto the skie,
I will do more.

Man is all weaknesse; there is no such thing
As Prince or King.
His arm is short, yet with a sling
He may do more.

An herb destill'd, and drunk, may dwell next doore
On the same floore
To a brave soul. Exalt the poore,
They can do more.

O raise me then! Poore bees, that work all day,
Sting my delay;
Who have a work as well as they,
And much, much more.

THE QUIDDITIE

My God, a verse is not a crown,
No point of honour, or gay suit,
No hawk, or banquet, or renown,
Nor a good sword, nor yet a lute:

It cannot vault, or dance, or play;
It never was in *France* or *Spain;*
Nor can it entertain the day
With a great stable or demain.

It is no office, art, or news,
Nor the Exchange, or busie Hall.
But it is that which while I use
I am with thee; and *Most, take all.*

THE ELIXER

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see;
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for thee.

Not rudely, as a beast,
To runne into an action;
But still to make thee prepossest,
And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glasse
On it may stay his eye,
Or if he pleaseth, through it passe,
And then the heav'n espie.

All may of thee partake;
Nothing can be so mean
Which with his tincture (for thy sake)
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgerie divine;
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for lesse be told.

EMPLOYMENT

He that is weary, let him sit!
My soul would stirre
And trade in courtesies and wit,
Quitting the furre
To cold complexions needing it.

Man is no starre, but a quick coal
Of mortall fire;
Who blows it not, nor doth controll
A faint desire,
Lets his own ashes choke his soul.

When th' elements did for place contest
With him whose will
Ordain'd the highest to be best,
The earth sat still,
And by the others is opprest.

Life is a businesse, not good cheer,
Ever in warres.
The sunne still shineth there or here,
Whereas the starres
Watch an advantage to appeare.

Oh that I were an Orenge-tree,
That busie plant!
Then should I ever laden be,
And never want
Some fruit for him that dressed me.

But we are still too young or old;
The man is gone
Before we do our wares unfold.
So we freeze on,
Untill the grave increase our cold.

ANTIPHON

Chor. Praised be the God of love,
Men. Here below,
Angels. And here above.
Cho. Who hath dealt his mercies so,
Ang. To his friend,
Men. And to his foe,

Cho. That both grace and glorie tend
Ang. Us of old,
Men. And us in th' end.
Cho. The great shepherd of the fold
Ang. Us did make,
Men. For us was sold.

Cho. He our foes in pieces brake.
Ang. Him we touch,
Men. And him we take.
Cho. Wherefore since that he is such,
Ang. We adore,
Men. And we do crouch.

Cho. Lord, thy praises should be more.
Men. We have none,
Ang. And we no store.
Cho. Praised be the God alone,
Who hath made of two folds one.

III

THE CHURCH

PREFACE

IN religion Herbert, with most of the devout men of his time, Anglicans no less than Puritans, is, as I have elsewhere argued, an individualist. The relations between God and his own soul are what interest him. Like Bunyan's Pilgrim, he undertakes a solitary journey to the heavenly city, and concerns himself little about his fellow men, except to cry aloud that they too are in danger. Any notion of dedicating himself to their welfare is foreign to him. Perhaps his poem THE WINDOWS comes nearest to expressing something like human responsibility. But such moods are rare. Usually his responsibility is to God alone; and this, passionately uttered in AARON and THE PRIESTHOOD, is the farthest point to which his self-centred piety carries his verse. The mystic forgets himself in the thought of God; the philanthropist, in the thought of human needs. To Herbert — at least to the poet Herbert — the personal relationship of the soul to God is the one matter of consequence.

In this relationship he finds the foundation of the Church. As the home organizes and gives opportunity of expression to the love of single persons for one another, so does the Church to the love of single persons and God. Herbert never

thinks of the Church in our modern fashion as the manifestation of God to collective humanity, progressively enlarging human powers and expanding human ideals. Nor does he conceive it as an august divine institution, venerable in itself, and rightly subordinating individuals to its own high ends. It is easy to mistake Herbert for an ecclesiastic, and to say, as has sometimes been said, that he cannot be understood by one who is not Episcopally born. But such an error is due to careless reading. He is, indeed, devoted to the Church. He talks of nothing else. But in his poem SION, as constantly though less explicitly elsewhere, he explains that the Church, God's Temple, is the human heart, and that *all its frame and fabrick is within.* His book he thus very naturally entitled THE CHURCH or TEMPLE, and told Ferrar that it was *a picture of the many Conflicts that have past betwixt God and my Soul before I could subject mine to the will of Jesus my Master.*

It is not strange, then, that one who has made the resolve which is set forth in the preceding Group of poems should become a singer of the Church and its ordinances as thus conceived. For these celebrate the going forth of a loving God to seek a wayward sinner. They show that sinner ill at ease so long as he is parted from his exalted friend, and they indicate the means through which a heavenly union may be accomplished. But one who takes love for his theme will find that there

are three ways of exploring it. He may directly inspect the yearning moods of the soul, viewing them as psychological facts of experience; or he may consider more abstractly the general relations involved in love, and treat these as theoretic subjects of contemplation; or lastly, he may catalogue the regularities of love, its habitual modes of expression, the fixed avenues through which the loved one becomes accessible. And all these ways are as open to the student of sacred love as to him who would study the profane.

Herbert adopts them all, sometimes in the same poem. I believe, however, I can make his work more intelligible if I roughly classify and divide according to this scheme. Those of his Cambridge poems which predominantly deal with his great theme in the direct way I accordingly entitle The Inner Life. Those which treat it as a subject for philosophic analysis I call Meditation. And to those which mark out its ordered paths I give the special name of The Church. It is true that in doing so I unwarrantably narrow Herbert's comprehensive word. Besides my Group, he covers with that holy name every stirring of the aspiring soul and every serious reflection on the life of love. It is the all-including title of his poems. But I see no harm in applying it, *par excellence* and after this explanation, to the institutional features of love. Only we must be careful to remember that these, no less than the poignant cries of separation

and suffering, derive their meanings from the individual experience of love.

There are advantages in placing this Group first, and in bringing the Group on The Inner Life into close connection with The Crisis. From their style, too, I suspect that most of these churchly poems are of earlier date than the majority of those which follow. That is certainly the case with the longest and most important, THE SACRIFICE; an archaic piece which, with all its compact power, is likely to prove somewhat repulsive to a modern taste. In it the suffering of Him who loves us is anatomized in elaborate, and perhaps too calculated, detail. Probably a reader will approach it most understandingly by comparing it with early Flemish and German paintings, or with Albert Dürer's woodcuts. Dürer's Passion and his Life of the Virgin were widely circulated in the century before Herbert. One fancies Herbert turning them over and designing his Altar-piece in their spirit. In it and them there is elaborate realism in setting forth an ideal scene, an exaggeration of physical pain, a forced ingenuity in distressful incident, and a failure to subordinate detail; while at the same time there is distributed everywhere a strange vividness, rich human sympathies, and the impression — conveyed, we hardly know how — that through all the crowded and homely circumstance the solemnest of world-events is occurring. In treating so sacred a subject Herbert allows himself

the smallest possible departure from the words of Scripture.

Following THE SACRIFICE, I set a series of festival songs, in which analogies of the soul's experience are found in historic events. With these falls the festival of SUNDAY, a day more frequent, pompous, and full of human significance than all other holy days. After it are grouped special modes of divine communication, — through PRAYER, SCRIPTURE, BAPTISME, COMMUNION, MUSICK. The group concludes with the solemn monitions of stately burial monuments, inciting the beholder to high aspiration and disentanglement from the body.

SUPERLIMINARE

THOU, whom the former precepts have
Sprinkled and taught how to behave
Thy self in church, approach, and taste
The churches mysticall repast.

AVOID, profanenesse! Come not here!
Nothing but holy, pure, and cleare,
Or that which groneth to be so,
May at his perill further go.

THE ALTAR

A BROKEN ALTAR, Lord, thy servant reares,
Made of a heart and cemented with teares;
Whose parts are as thy hand did frame;
No workman's tool hath touch'd the same.

A HEART alone
Is such a stone
As nothing but
Thy pow'r doth cut.
Wherefore each part
Of my hard heart
Meets in this frame
To praise thy name;

That if I chance to hold my peace,
These stones to praise thee may not cease.
O let thy blessed SACRIFICE be mine,
And sanctifie this ALTAR to be thine.

THE SACRIFICE

Oh *all ye* who passe by, whose eyes and minde
To worldly things are sharp, but to me blinde,
To me who took eyes that I might you finde,
Was ever grief like mine?

The Princes of my people make a head
Against their Maker; they do wish me dead,
Who cannot wish except I give them bread.
Was ever grief like mine?

Without me each one who doth now me brave
Had to this day been an Egyptian slave.
They use that power against me which I gave.
Was ever grief like mine?

Mine own Apostle, who the bag did beare,
Though he had all I had, did not forbeare
To sell me also and to put me there.
Was ever grief, &c.

For thirtie pence he did my death devise
Who at three hundred did the ointment prize,
Not half so sweet as my sweet sacrifice.
Was ever grief like mine?

Therefore my soul melts, and my heart's deare treasure
Drops bloud (the onely beads) my words to measure:
O let this cup passe, if it be thy pleasure.
Was ever grief, &c.

These drops, being temper'd with a sinner's tears,
A Balsome are for both the Hemispheres;
Curing all wounds but mine, all but my fears.
Was ever grief, &c.

Yet my Disciples sleep. I cannot gain
One houre of watching; but their drowsie brain
Comforts not me, and doth my doctrine stain.
Was ever grief, &c.

Arise, arise! They come. Look, how they runne!
Alas! What haste they make to be undone!
How with their lanterns do they seek the sunne!
Was ever grief, &c.

With clubs and staves they seek me as a thief
Who am the way of truth, the true relief,
Most true to those who are my greatest grief.
Was ever grief like mine?

Judas, dost thou betray me with a kisse?
Canst thou finde hell about my lips? And misse
Of life just at the gates of life and blisse?
Was ever grief, &c.

See, they lay hold on me not with the hands
Of faith, but furie. Yet at their commands
I suffer binding, who have loos'd their bands.
Was ever grief, &c.

All my Disciples flie; fear puts a barre
Betwixt my friends and me. They leave the starre
That brought the wise men of the East from farre.
Was ever grief, &c.

Then from one ruler to another bound
They leade me, urging that it was not sound
What I taught. Comments would the text con-
found.
Was ever grief, &c.

The Priest and rulers all false witnesse seek
'Gainst him who seeks not life, but is the meek
And readie Paschal Lambe of this great week.
Was ever grief like mine?

Then they accuse me of great blasphemie,
That I did thrust into the Deitie,
Who never thought that any robberie.
Was ever grief, &c.

Some said that I the Temple to the floore
In three dayes raz'd, and raised as before.
Why, he that built the world can do much more.
Was ever grief, &c.

Then they condemne me all with that same breath
Which I do give them daily, unto death.
Thus *Adam* my first breathing rendereth.
Was ever grief, &c.

They binde, and leade me unto *Herod*. He
Sends me to *Pilate*. This makes them agree;
But yet their friendship is my enmitie.
Was ever grief, &c.

Herod and all his bands do set me light
Who teach all hands to warre, fingers to fight,
And onely am the Lord of hosts and might.
Was ever grief like mine?

Herod in judgement sits, while I do stand;
Examines me with a censorious hand.
I him obey, who all things else command.
Was ever grief, &c.

The *Jews* accuse me with despitefulnesse,
And vying malice with my gentlenesse,
Pick quarrels with their onely happinesse.
Was ever grief, &c.

I answer nothing, but with patience prove
If stonie hearts will melt with gentle love.
But who does hawk at eagles with a dove?
Was ever grief, &c.

My silence rather doth augment their crie;
My dove doth back into my bosome flie,
Because the raging waters still are high.
Was ever grief, &c.

Heark how they crie aloud still, *Crucifie!*
It is not fit he live a day, they crie,
Who cannot live lesse then eternally.
Was ever grief like mine?

Pilate, a stranger, holdeth off; but they,
Mine owne deare people, cry, *Away, away!*
With noises confused frighting the day.
Was ever grief, &c.

Yet still they shout and crie and stop their eares,
Putting my life among their sinnes and fears,
And therefore with *my bloud on them and theirs.*
Was ever grief, &c.

See how spite cankers things. These words, aright
Used and wished, are the whole world's light;
But hony is their gall, brightnesse their night.
Was ever grief, &c.

They choose a murderer, and all agree
In him to do themselves a courtesie;
For it was their own cause who killed me.
Was ever grief, &c.

And a seditious murderer he was,
But I the Prince of peace; peace that doth passe
All understanding, more then heav'n doth glasse.
Was ever grief like mine?

Why, Cesar is their onely King, not I.
He clave the stonie rock when they were drie;
But surely not their hearts, as I well trie.
Was ever grief, &c.

Ah, How they scourge me! Yet my tendernesse
Doubles each lash, and yet their bitternesse
Windes up my grief to a mysteriousnesse.
Was ever grief, &c.

They buffet me and box me as they list,
Who grasp the earth and heaven with my fist,
And never yet, whom I would punish, miss'd.
Was ever grief, &c.

Behold, they spit on me in scornfull wise
Who by my spittle gave the blinde man eies,
Leaving his blindnesse to mine enemies.
Was ever grief, &c.

My face they cover, though it be divine.
As *Moses*' face was vailed, so is mine,
Lest on their double-dark souls either shine.
Was ever grief like mine?

Servants and abjects flout me; they are wittie:
Now prophesie who strikes thee, is their dittie.
So they in me denie themselves all pitie.
Was ever grief, &c.

And now I am deliver'd unto death,
Which each one cals for so with utmost breath
That he before me well nigh suffereth.
Was ever grief, &c.

Weep not, deare friends, since I for both have wept
When all my tears were bloud, the while you slept.
Your tears for your own fortunes should be kept.
Was ever grief, &c.

The souldiers lead me to the common hall;
There they deride me, they abuse me all.
Yet for twelve heav'nly legions I could call.
Was ever grief, &c.

Then with a scarlet robe they me aray;
Which shews my bloud to be the onely way
And cordiall left to repair man's decay.
Was ever grief like mine?

Then on my head a crown of thorns I wear;
For these are all the grapes *Sion* doth bear,
Though I my vine planted and watred there.
Was ever grief, &c.

So sits the earth's great curse in *Adam's* fall
Upon my head. So I remove it all
From th' earth unto my brows, and bear the thrall.
Was ever grief, &c.

Then with the reed they gave to me before
They strike my head, the rock from whence all store
Of heav'nly blessings issue evermore.
Was ever grief, &c.

They bow their knees to me and cry, *Hail king!*
What ever scoffes or scornfulnesse can bring,
I am the floore, the sink, where they it fling.
Was ever grief, &c.

Yet since man's scepters are as frail as reeds,
And thorny all their crowns, bloudie their weeds,
I, who am Truth, turn into truth their deeds.
Was ever grief like mine?

The souldiers also spit upon that face
Which Angels did desire to have the grace,
And Prophets, once to see, but found no place.
Was ever grief, &c.

Thus trimmed, forth they bring me to the rout,
Who *Crucifie him!* crie with one strong shout.
God holds his peace at man, and man cries out.
Was ever grief, &c.

They leade me in once more, and putting then
Mine own clothes on, they leade me out agen.
Whom devils flie, thus is he toss'd of men.
Was ever grief, &c.

And now wearie of sport, glad to ingrosse
All spite in one, counting my life their losse,
They carrie me to my most bitter crosse.
Was ever grief, &c.

My crosse I bear my self untill I faint.
Then Simon bears it for me by constraint,
The decreed burden of each mortall Saint.
Was ever grief like mine?

O all ye who passe by, behold and see!
Man stole the fruit, but I must climbe the tree;
The tree of life to all but onely me.
Was ever grief, &c.

Lo, here I hang, charg'd with a world of sinne,
The greater world o' th' two; for that came in
By words, but this by sorrow I must win.
Was ever grief, &c.

Such sorrow as, if sinfull man could feel
Or feel his part, he would not cease to kneel
Till all were melted, though he were all steel.
Was ever grief, &c.

But, *O my God, my God!* why leav'st thou me,
The sonne, in whom thou dost delight to be?
My God, my God ———
Never was grief like mine.

Shame tears my soul, my bodie many a wound;
Sharp nails pierce this, but sharper that confound;
Reproches, which are free, while I am bound.
Was ever grief like mine?

Now heal thy self, Physician, now come down!
Alas! I did so, when I left my crown
And father's smile for you, to feel his frown.
Was ever grief, &c.

In healing not my self, there doth consist
All that salvation which ye now resist;
Your safetie in my sicknesse doth subsist.
Was ever grief, &c.

Betwixt two theeves I spend my utmost breath,
As he that for some robberie suffereth.
Alas! what have I stollen from you? Death.
Was ever grief, &c.

A king my title is, prefixt on high;
Yet by my subjects am condemn'd to die
A servile death in servile companie.
Was ever grief, &c.

They gave me vineger mingled with gall,
But more with malice. Yet when they did call,
With Manna, Angels' food, I fed them all.
Was ever grief like mine?

They part my garments and by lot dispose
My coat, the type of love, which once cur'd those
Who sought for help, never malicious foes.
Was ever grief, &c.

Nay, after death their spite shall further go;
For they will pierce my side, I full well know,
That as sinne came, so Sacraments might flow.
Was ever grief, &c.

But now I die, now all is finished;
My wo, man's weal. And now I bow my head.
Onely let others say, when I am dead,
Never was grief like mine.

GOOD FRIDAY

O my chief good,
How shall I measure out thy bloud?
How shall I count what thee befell,
And each grief tell?

Shall I thy woes
Number according to thy foes?
Or, since one starre show'd thy first breath,
Shall all thy death?

Or shall each leaf
Which falls in Autumne score a grief?
Or cannot leaves, but fruit, be signe
Of the true vine?

Then let each houre
Of my whole life one grief devoure;
That thy distresse through all may runne,
And be my sunne.

Or rather let
My severall sinnes their sorrows get;
That as each beast his cure doth know,
Each sinne may so.

Since bloud is fittest, Lord, to write
Thy sorrows in and bloudie fight;
My heart hath store, write there, where in
One box doth lie both ink and sinne.

That when sinne spies so many foes,
Thy whips, thy nails, thy wounds, thy woes,
All come to lodge there, sinne may say,
No room for me, and flie away.

Sinne being gone, oh fill the place
And keep possession with thy grace!
Lest sinne take courage and return,
And all the writings blot or burn.

EASTER

Rise, heart, thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise
Without delayes,
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise
With him mayst rise;
That, as his death calcined thee to dust,
His life may make thee gold, and much more, just.

Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part
With all thy art:
The crosse taught all wood to resound his name
Who bore the same;
His streched sinews taught all strings what key
Is best to celebrate this most high day.

Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song
Pleasant and long.
Or, since all musick is but three parts vied
And multiplied,
O let thy blessed Spirit bear a part,
And make up our defects with his sweet art.

I got me flowers to straw thy way,
  I got me boughs off many a tree,
But thou wast up by break of day,
  And brought'st thy sweets along with thee.

The Sunne arising in the East,
  Though he give light, and th' East perfume,
If they should offer to contest
  With thy arising, they presume.

Can there be any day but this,
  Though many sunnes to shine endeavour?
We count three hundred, but we misse;
  There is but one, and that one ever.

WHITSUNDAY

Listen, sweet Dove, unto my song
And spread thy golden wings in me;
Hatching my tender heart so long
Till it get wing and flie away with thee.

Where is that fire which once descended
On thy Apostles? Thou didst then
Keep open house, richly attended,
Feasting all comers by twelve chosen men.

Such glorious gifts thou didst bestow
That th' earth did like a heav'n appeare;
The starres were coming down to know
If they might mend their wages and serve here.

The sunne, which once did shine alone,
Hung down his head and wisht for night
When he beheld twelve sunnes for one
Going about the world and giving light.

But since those pipes of gold, which brought
That cordiall water to our ground,
Were cut and martyr'd by the fault
Of those who did themselves through their side wound,

Thou shutt'st the doore and keep'st within,
Scarce a good joy creeps through the chink;
And if the braves of conqu'ring sinne
Did not excite thee, we should wholly sink.

Lord, though we change, thou art the same;
The same sweet God of love and light.
Restore this day, for thy great name,
Unto his ancient and miraculous right.

TRINITIE-SUNDAY

Lord, who hast form'd me out of mud,
And hast redeem'd me through thy bloud,
And sanctifi'd me to do good,

Purge all my sinnes done heretofore;
For I confesse my heavie score,
And I will strive to sinne no more.

Enrich my heart, mouth, hands in me,
With faith, with hope, with charitie,
That I may runne, rise, rest with thee.

TO ALL ANGELS AND SAINTS

Oh glorious spirits, who after all your bands
See the smooth face of God without a frown
Or strict commands;
Where ev'ry one is king, and hath his crown
If not upon his head, yet in his hands;

Not out of envie or maliciousnesse
Do I forbear to crave your speciall aid.
I would addresse
My vows to thee most gladly, blessed Maid,
And Mother of my God, in my distresse.

Thou art the holy mine whence came the gold,
The great restorative for all decay
In young and old.
Thou art the cabinet where the jewell lay;
Chiefly to thee would I my soul unfold.

But now (alas!) I dare not, for our King,
Whom we do all joyntly adore and praise,
Bids no such thing;
And where his pleasure no injunction layes,
('T is your own case) ye never move a wing.

All worship is prerogative, and a flower
Of his rich crown from whom lyes no appeal
At the last houre.
Therefore we dare not from his garland steal
To make a posie for inferiour power.

Although then others court you, if ye know
What's done on earth, we shall not fare the worse
Who do not so;
Since we are ever ready to disburse,
If any one our Master's hand can show.

CHRISTMAS

All after pleasures as I rid one day,
My horse and I both tir'd, bodie and minde,
With full crie of affections quite astray,
I took up in the next inne I could finde.
There when I came, whom found I but my deare,
My dearest Lord, expecting till the grief
Of pleasures brought me to him, readie there
To be all passengers' most sweet relief?
O Thou, whose glorious yet contracted light,
Wrapt in night's mantle, stole into a manger,
Since my dark soul and brutish is thy right,
To Man of all beasts be not thou a stranger.
Furnish and deck my soul, that thou mayst have
A better lodging then a rack, or grave.

The shepherds sing, and shall I silent be?
My God, no hymne for thee?
My soul's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds
Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.
The pasture is thy word; the streams, thy grace
Enriching all the place.
Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers
Out-sing the day-light houres.
Then we will chide the sunne for letting night
Take up his place and right.
We sing one common Lord; wherefore he should
Himself the candle hold.
I will go searching, till I finde a sunne
Shall stay till we have done,
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly
As frost-nipt sunnes look sadly.
Then we will sing and shine all our own day,
And one another pay.
His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine
Till ev'n his beams sing and my musick shine.

LENT

Welcome, deare feast of Lent! Who loves not thee,
He loves not Temperance or Authoritie,
But is compos'd of passion.
The Scriptures bid us *fast;* the Church sayes, *now;*
Give to thy Mother what thou wouldst allow
To ev'ry Corporation.

The humble soul, compos'd of love and fear,
Begins at home and layes the burden there,
When doctrines disagree.
He sayes, in things which use hath justly got,
I am a scandall to the Church, and not
The Church is so to me.

True Christians should be glad of an occasion
To use their temperance, seeking no evasion
When good is seasonable;
Unlesse Authoritie, which should increase
The obligation in us, make it lesse,
And Power it self disable.

Besides the cleannesse of sweet abstinence,
Quick thoughts and motions at a small expense,
A face not fearing light;
Whereas in fulnesse there are sluttish fumes,
Sowre exhalations, and dishonest rheumes,
Revenging the delight.

Then those same pendant profits, which the spring
And Easter intimate, enlarge the thing
And goodnesse of the deed.
Neither ought other men's abuse of Lent
Spoil the good use, lest by that argument
We forfeit all our Creed.

It's true we cannot reach Christ's forti'th day;
Yet to go part of that religious way
Is better then to rest.
We cannot reach our Saviour's puritie;
Yet are we bid, *Be holy ev'n as he.*
In both let's do our best.

Who goeth in the way which Christ hath gone,
Is much more sure to meet with him then one
That travelleth by-wayes.
Perhaps my God, though he be farre before,
May turn and take me by the hand, and more
May strengthen my decayes.

Yet Lord instruct us to improve our fast
By starving sinne, and taking such repast
As may our faults controll;
That ev'ry man may revell at his doore,
Not in his parlour; banquetting the poore,
And among those his soul.

SUNDAY

O DAY most calm, most bright,
The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
Th' indorsement of supreme delight,
Writ by a friend, and with his bloud;
The couch of time, care's balm and bay;
The week were dark but for thy light,
Thy torch doth show the way.

The other dayes and thou
Make up one man, whose face thou art,
Knocking at heaven with thy brow.
The worky-daies are the back-part;
The burden of the week lies there,
Making the whole to stoup and bow
Till thy release appeare.

Man had straight forward gone
To endlesse death; but thou dost pull
And turn us round to look on one
Whom, if we were not very dull,
We could not choose but look on still;
Since there is no place so alone
The which he doth not fill.

Sundaies the pillars are
On which heav'ns palace arched lies;
The other dayes fill up the spare
And hollow room with vanities.
They are the fruitfull beds and borders
In God's rich garden; that is bare
Which parts their ranks and orders.

The Sundaies of man's life,
Thredded together on time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternall glorious King.
On Sunday heaven's gate stands ope,
Blessings are plentifull and rife,
More plentifull then hope.

This day my Saviour rose,
And did inclose this light for his;
That, as each beast his manger knows,
Man might not of his fodder misse.
Christ hath took in this piece of ground,
And made a garden there for those
Who want herbs for their wound.

The rest of our Creation
Our great Redeemer did remove
With the same shake which at his passion
Did th' earth and all things with it move.
As Samson bore the doores away,
Christ's hands, though nail'd, wrought our salvation
And did unhinge that day.

The brightnesse of that day
We sullied by our foul offence;
Wherefore that robe we cast away,
Having a new at his expence
Whose drops of bloud paid the full price
That was requir'd to make us gay,
And fit for Paradise.

Thou art a day of mirth;
And where the week-dayes trail on ground,
Thy flight is higher, as thy birth.
O let me take thee at the bound,
Leaping with thee from sev'n to sev'n,
Till that we both, being toss'd from earth,
Flie hand in hand to heav'n!

PRAYER

Prayer the Churches banquet, Angel's age,
God's breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
The Christian plummet sounding heav'n and earth;
Engine against th' Almightie, sinner's towre,
Reversed thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
The six-daies-world transposing in an houre,
A kinde of tune which all things heare and fear;
Softnesse and peace and joy and love and blisse,
Exalted Manna, gladnesse of the best,
Heaven in ordinarie, man well drest,
The milkie way, the bird of Paradise,
Church-bels beyond the starres heard, the soul's bloud,
The land of spices; something understood.

PRAYER

Of what an easie quick accesse,
My blessed Lord, art thou! How suddenly
May our requests thine eare invade!
To shew that state dislikes not easinesse,
If I but lift mine eyes my suit is made;
Thou canst no more not heare then thou canst die.

Of what supreme almightie power
Is thy great arm, which spans the east and west
And tacks the centre to the sphere!
By it do all things live their measur'd houre.
We cannot ask the thing which is not there,
Blaming the shallownesse of our request.

Of what unmeasureable love
Art thou possest who, when thou couldst not die,
Wert fain to take our flesh and curse
And for our sakes in person sinne reprove,
That by destroying that which ty'd thy purse,
Thou mightst make way for liberalitie!

Since then these three wait on thy throne,
Ease, *Power*, and *Love;* I value prayer so
That were I to leave all but one,
Wealth, fame, endowments, vertues, all should go;
I and deare prayer would together dwell,
And quickly gain, for each inch lost, an ell.

THE H. SCRIPTURES

I

Oh Book! Infinite sweetnesse! Let my heart
Suck ev'ry letter and a hony gain,
Precious for any grief in any part,
To cleare the breast, to mollifie all pain.
Thou art all health, health thriving till it make
A full eternitie. Thou art a masse
Of strange delights, where we may wish and take.
Ladies, look here! This is the thankfull glasse
That mends the looker's eyes; this is the well
That washes what it shows. Who can indeare
Thy praise too much? Thou art heav'n's Lidger here,
Working against the states of death and hell.
Thou art joyes handsell. Heav'n lies flat in thee,
Subject to ev'ry mounter's bended knee.

41266
LIBRARY

II

Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine,
And the configurations of their glorie!
Seeing not onely how each verse doth shine,
But all the constellations of the storie.
This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie;
Then as dispersed herbs do watch a potion,
These three make up some Christian's destinie.
Such are thy secrets, which my life makes good,
And comments on thee; for in ev'ry thing
Thy words do finde me out, and parallels bring,
And in another make me understood.
Starres are poore books, and oftentimes do misse;
This book of starres lights to eternall blisse.

H. BAPTISME

As he that sees a dark and shadie grove
  Stayes not, but looks beyond it on the skie;
  So when I view my sinnes, mine eyes remove
More backward still and to that water flie
Which is above the heav'ns, whose spring and rent
  Is in my deare Redeemer's pierced side.
  O blessed streams! Either ye do prevent
And stop our sinnes from growing thick and wide,
Or else give tears to drown them as they grow.
  In you Redemption measures all my time
  And spreads the plaister equall to the crime.
You taught the book of life my name, that so,
  What ever future sinnes should me miscall,
  Your first acquaintance might discredit all.

H. BAPTISME

Since, Lord, to thee
A narrow way and little gate
Is all the passage, on my infancie
Thou didst lay hold and antedate
My faith in me.

O let me still
Write thee great God, and me a childe.
Let me be soft and supple to thy will,
Small to my self, to others milde,
Behither ill.

Although by stealth
My flesh get on, yet let her sister,
My soul, bid nothing but preserve her wealth.
The growth of flesh is but a blister;
Childhood is health.

THE H. COMMUNION

Not in rich furniture or fine aray,
Nor in a wedge of gold,
Thou, who from me wast sold,
To me dost now thy self convey;
For so thou should'st without me still have been,
Leaving within me sinne.

But by the way of nourishment and strength
Thou creep'st into my breast,
Making thy way my rest,
And thy small quantities my length;
Which spread their forces into every part,
Meeting sinne's force and art.

Yet can these not get over to my soul,
Leaping the wall that parts
Our souls and fleshly hearts;
But as th' outworks, they may controll
My rebel-flesh, and carrying thy name,
Affright both sinne and shame.

Onely thy grace, which with these elements comes,
Knoweth the ready way
And hath the privie key,
Op'ning the soul's most subtile rooms;
While those to spirits refin'd at doore attend
Dispatches from their friend.

Give me my captive soul, or take
My bodie also thither.
Another lift like this will make
Them both to be together.

Before that sinne turn'd flesh to stone,
And all our lump to leaven,
A fervent sigh might well have blown
Our innocent earth to heaven.

For sure when Adam did not know
To sinne, or sinne to smother,
He might to heav'n from Paradise go
As from one room t'another.

Thou hast restor'd us to this ease
By this thy heav'nly bloud;
Which I can go to when I please,
And leave th' earth to their food.

CHURCH-MUSICK

SWEETEST of sweets, I thank you! When displeasure
Did through my bodie wound my minde,
You took me thence, and in your house of pleasure
A daintie lodging me assign'd.

Now I in you without a bodie move,
Rising and falling with your wings.
We both together sweetly live and love,
Yet say sometimes, *God help poore Kings.*

Comfort, I'le die; for if you poste from me,
Sure I shall do so, and much more.
But if I travell in your companie,
You know the way to heaven's doore.

CHURCH-MONUMENTS

While that my soul repairs to her devotion,
Here I intombe my flesh, that it betimes
May take acquaintance of this heap of dust,
To which the blast of death's incessant motion,
Fed with the exhalation of our crimes,
Drives all at last. Therefore I gladly trust

My bodie to this school, that it may learn
To spell his elements, and finde his birth
Written in dustie heraldrie and lines
Which dissolution sure doth best discern,
Comparing dust with dust, and earth with earth.
These laugh at Ieat and Marble put for signes

To sever the good fellowship of dust,
And spoil the meeting. What shall point out them,
When they shall bow and kneel and fall down flat
To kisse those heaps which now they have in trust?
Deare flesh, while I do pray, learne here thy stemme
And true descent; that when thou shalt grow fat

And wanton in thy cravings, thou mayst know
That flesh is but the glasse which holds the dust
That measures all our time; which also shall
Be crumbled into dust. Mark here below
How tame these ashes are, how free from lust,
That thou mayst fit thyself against thy fall.

IV

MEDITATION

PREFACE

HERE are grouped the most serious studies of Herbert's Cambridge days, studies of the natures of God and man, and of the possible relations between the two. A similar set, though longer and of profounder import, was written at Bemerton, and appears later as Group IX. The poems of these two Groups have an abstract and impersonal character distinguishing them from the rest of the work of this singularly personal writer. In them Herbert's favorite pronoun, *I*, rarely appears; though of course these, no less than the others, study the approaches of God and the individual soul.

The arrangement is as follows: After a few verses reproducing something of the sententious wisdom of THE CHURCH-PORCH comes the compact poem on MAN, a favorite with R. W. Emerson and with all readers who love penetrative thought and daring phrase. THE WORLD depicts the construction of Man as clumsily managed by himself. To it succeed discussions of SINNE, FAITH, and REDEMPTION, themes seldom absent from Herbert's mind. And then comes a series of

what is almost as frequent with him, reflections on human changeableness; the whole naturally concluding with some young man's verse about DEATH and the life beyond.

CHARMS AND KNOTS

Who reade a chapter when they rise,
Shall ne're be troubled with ill eyes.

A poore man's rod, when thou dost ride,
Is both a weapon and a guide.

Who shuts his hand, hath lost his gold;
Who opens it, hath it twice told.

Who goes to bed and doth not pray,
Maketh two nights to ev'ry day.

Who by aspersions throw a stone
At th' head of others, hit their own.

Who looks on ground with humble eyes,
Findes himself there, and seeks to rise.

When th' hair is sweet through pride or lust,
The powder doth forget the dust.

Take one from ten, and what remains?
Ten still, if sermons go for gains.

In shallow waters heav'n doth show;
But who drinks on, to hell may go.

MAN

My God, I heard this day
That none doth build a stately habitation
But he that means to dwell therein.
What house more stately hath there been,
Or can be, then is Man? To whose creation
All things are in decay.

For Man is ev'ry thing,
And more. He is a tree, yet bears no fruit;
A beast, yet is, or should be more;
Reason and speech we onely bring.
Parrats may thank us if they are not mute,
They go upon the score.

Man is all symmetrie,
Full of proportions, one limbe to another,
And all to all the world besides.
Each part may call the farthest, brother;
For head with foot hath private amitie,
And both with moons and tides.

Nothing hath got so farre
But Man hath caught and kept it as his prey.
His eyes dismount the highest starre.
He is in little all the sphere.
Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Finde their acquaintance there.

For us the windes do blow,
The earth doth rest, heav'n move, and fountains flow.
Nothing we see but means our good,
As our *delight*, or as our *treasure;*
The whole is either our cupboard of *food*
Or cabinet of *pleasure.*

The starres have us to bed;
Night draws the curtain, which the sunne withdraws;
Musick and light attend our head.
All things unto our *flesh* are kinde
In their *descent* and *being;* to our *minde*
In their *ascent* and *cause.*

Each thing is full of dutie:
Waters united are our navigation;
Distinguished, our habitation;
Below, our drink; above, our meat;
Both are our cleanlinesse. Hath one such beautie?
Then how are all things neat?

More servants wait on Man
Then he'l take notice of; in ev'ry path
He treads down that which doth befriend him
When sicknesse makes him pale and wan.
Oh mightie love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him.

Since then, my God, thou hast
So brave a Palace built, O dwell in it,
That it may dwell with thee at last!
Till then afford us so much wit
That as the world serves us we may serve thee,
And both thy servants be.

THE WORLD

Love built a stately house; where *Fortune* came,
And spinning phansies she was heard to say
That her fine cobwebs did support the frame,
Whereas they were supported by the same.
But *Wisdome* quickly swept them all away.

Then *Pleasure* came, who liking not the fashion,
Began to make *Balcones*, *Terraces*,
Till she had weakned all by alteration;
But rev'rend *laws* and many a *proclamation*
Reformed all at length with menaces.

Then enter'd *Sinne*, and with that Sycomore,
Whose leaves first sheltred man from drought and dew,
Working and winding slily evermore,
The inward walls and Sommers cleft and tore;
But *Grace* shor'd these, and cut that as it grew.

Then *Sinne* combin'd with *Death* in a firm band
To rase the building to the very floore;
Which they effected, none could them withstand.
But *Love* and *Grace* took *Glorie* by the hand
And built a braver Palace then before.

SINNE

O THAT I could a sinne once see!
We paint the devil foul, yet he
Hath some good in him, all agree.
Sinne is flat opposite to th' Almighty, seeing
It wants the good of *vertue* and of *being*.

But God more care of us hath had:
If apparitions make us sad,
By sight of sinne we should grow mad.
Yet as in sleep we see foul death and live;
So devils are our sinnes in perspective.

SINNE

Lord, with what care hast thou begirt us round!
Parents first season us; then schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws; they send us bound
To rules of reason, holy messengers,
Pulpits and sundayes, sorrow dogging sinne,
Afflictions sorted, anguish of all sizes,
Fine nets and strategems to catch us in.
Bibles laid open, millions of surprises,
Blessings beforehand, tyes of gratefulnesse,
The sound of glorie ringing in our eares;
Without, our shame; within, our consciences;
Angels and grace, eternall hopes and fears.
Yet all these fences and their whole aray
One cunning bosome-sinne blows quite away.

FAITH

Lord, how couldst thou so much appease
Thy wrath for sinne, as when man's sight was dimme
And could see little, to regard his ease
And bring by Faith all things to him?

Hungrie I was and had no meat.
I did conceit a most delicious feast;
I had it straight, and did as truly eat
As ever did a welcome guest.

There is a rare outlandish root
Which, when I could not get, I thought it here;
That apprehension cur'd so well my foot
That I can walk to heav'n well neare.

I owed thousands and much more.
I did beleeve that I did nothing owe
And liv'd accordingly; my creditor
Beleeves so too, and lets me go.

Faith makes me any thing, or all
That I beleeve is in the sacred storie.
And where sinne placeth me in Adam's fall,
Faith sets me higher in his glorie.

If I go lower in the book,
What can be lower then the common manger?
Faith puts me there with him who sweetly took
Our flesh and frailtie, death and danger.

If blisse had lien in art or strength,
None but the wise or strong had gained it,
Where now by Faith all arms are of a length;
One size doth all conditions fit.

A peasant may beleeve as much
As a great Clerk, and reach the highest stature.
Thus dost thou make proud knowledge bend and crouch
While grace fills up uneven nature.

When creatures had no reall light
Inherent in them, thou didst make the sunne
Impute a lustre and allow them bright,
And in this shew what Christ hath done.

That which before was darkned clean
With bushie groves, pricking the looker's eie,
Vanisht away when Faith did change the scene;
And then appear'd a glorious skie.

What though my bodie runne to dust?
Faith cleaves unto it, counting evr'y grain
With an exact and most particular trust,
Reserving all for flesh again.

REDEMPTION

Having been tenant long to a rich Lord,
Not thriving, I resolved to be bold,
And make a suit unto him to afford
A new small-rented lease and cancell th' old.
In heaven at his manour I him sought.
They told me there that he was lately gone
About some land which he had dearly bought
Long since on earth, to take possession.
I straight return'd, and knowing his great birth,
Sought him accordingly in great resorts,
In cities, theatres, gardens, parks, and courts.
At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth
Of theeves and murderers; there I him espied,
Who straight, *Your suit is granted*, said, and died.

HUMILITIE

I saw the Vertues sitting hand in hand
In sev'rall ranks upon an azure throne,
Where all the beasts and fowls by their command
Presented tokens of submission.
Humilitie, who sat the lowest there
To execute their call,
When by the beasts the presents tendred were,
Gave them about to all.

The angrie Lion did present his paw,
Which by consent was giv'n to Mansuetude.
The fearfull Hare her eares, which by their law
Humilitie did reach to Fortitude.
The jealous Turkie brought his corall-chain;
That went to Temperance.
On Justice was bestow'd the Foxes brain,
Kill'd in the way by chance.

At length the Crow bringing the Peacock's plume,
(For he would not,) as they beheld the grace
Of that brave gift, each one began to fume,
And challenge it as proper to his place,
Till they fell out; which when the beasts espied,
They leapt upon the throne;
And if the Fox had liv'd to rule their side,
They had depos'd each one.

Humilitie, who held the plume, at this
Did weep so fast that the tears trickling down
Spoil'd all the train; then saying, *Here it is*
For which ye wrangle, made them turn their frown
Against the beasts. So joyntly bandying,
They drive them soon away,
And then amerc'd them double gifts to bring
At the next Session-day.

UNGRATEFULNESSE

Lord, with what bountie and rare clemencie
Hast thou redeem'd us from the grave!
If thou hadst let us runne,
Gladly had man ador'd the sunne,
And thought his god most brave;
Where now we shall be better gods then he.

Thou hast but two rare cabinets full of treasure,
The *Trinitie* and *Incarnation*.
Thou hast unlockt them both,
And made them jewels to betroth
The work of thy creation
Unto thy self in everlasting pleasure.

The statelier cabinet is the *Trinitie*,
Whose sparkling light accesse denies.
Therefore thou dost not show
This fully to us till death blow
The dust into our eyes;
For by that powder thou wilt make us see.

But all thy sweets are packt up in the other,
Thy mercies thither flock and flow;
That as the first affrights,
This may allure us with delights,
Because this box we know,
For we have all of us just such another.

But man is close, reserv'd, and dark to thee.
When thou demandest but a heart,
He cavils instantly.
In his poore cabinet of bone
Sinnes have their box apart,
Defrauding thee, who gavest two for one.

AFFLICTION

My God, I read this day
That planted Paradise was not so firm
As was and is thy floting Ark; whose stay
And anchor thou art onely, to confirm
And strengthen it in ev'ry age,
When waves do rise and tempests rage.

At first we liv'd in pleasure:
Thine own delights thou didst to us impart.
When we grew wanton, thou didst use displeasure
To make us thine; yet that we might not part,
As we at first did board with thee,
Now thou wouldst taste our miserie.

There is but joy and grief;
If either will convert us, we are thine.
Some Angels us'd the first; if our relief
Take up the second, then thy double line
And sev'rall baits in either kinde
Furnish thy table to thy minde.

Affliction then is ours.
We are the trees whom shaking fastens more,
While blustring windes destroy the wanton bowres,
And ruffle all their curious knots and store.
My God, so temper joy and wo
That thy bright beams may tame thy bow.

MISERIE

Lord, let the Angels praise thy name;
Man is a foolish thing, a foolish thing,
Folly and Sinne play all his game.
His house still burns, and yet he still doth sing,
Man is but grasse,
He knows it, fill the glasse.

How canst thou brook his foolishnesse?
Why he'l not lose a cup of drink for thee.
Bid him but temper his excesse,
Not he; he knows where he can better be,
As he will swear,
Then to serve thee in fear.

What strange pollutions doth he wed,
And make his own! As if none knew but he.
No man shall beat into his head
That thou within his curtains drawn canst see.
They are of cloth,
Where never yet came moth.

The best of men, turn but thy hand
For one poore minute, stumble at a pinne.
They would not have their actions scann'd,
Nor any sorrow tell them that they sinne,
Though it be small,
And measure not their fall.

They quarrell thee, and would give over
The bargain made to serve thee; but thy love
Holds them unto it and doth cover
Their follies with the wing of thy milde Dove,
Not suff'ring those
Who would, to be thy foes.

My God, Man cannot praise thy name.
Thou art all brightnesse, perfect puritie;
The sunne holds down his head for shame,
Dead with eclipses, when we speak of thee.
How shall infection
Presume on thy perfection?

As dirtie hands foul all they touch,
And those things most which are most pure and fine,
So our clay hearts, ev'n when we crouch
To sing thy praises, make them lesse divine.
Yet either this
Or none thy portion is.

Man cannot serve thee; let him go,
And serve the swine. There, there is his delight.
He doth not like this vertue, no;
Give him his dirt to wallow in all night.
These Preachers make
His head to shoot and ake.

Oh foolish man! Where are thine eyes?
How hast thou lost them in a croud of cares?
Thou pull'st the rug and wilt not rise,
No, not to purchase the whole pack of starres.
There let them shine,
Thou must go sleep or dine.

The bird that sees a daintie bowre
Made in the tree where she was wont to sit,
Wonders and sings, but not his power
Who made the arbour; this exceeds her wit.
But Man doth know
The spring whence all things flow:

And yet, as though he knew it not,
His knowledge winks and lets his humours reigne.
They make his life a constant blot,
And all the bloud of God to run in vain.
Ah wretch! What verse
Can thy strange wayes rehearse?

Indeed at first Man was a treasure,
A box of jewels, shop of rarities,
A ring whose posie was, *My pleasure.*
He was a garden in a Paradise.
Glorie and grace
Did crown his heart and face.

But sinne hath fool'd him. Now he is
A lump of flesh, without a foot or wing
To raise him to the glimpse of blisse;
A sick toss'd vessel, dashing on each thing;
Nay, his own shelf;
My God, I mean my self.

MORTIFICATION

How soon doth man decay!
When clothes are taken from a chest of sweets
To swaddle infants, whose young breath
Scarce knows the way,
Those clouts are little winding sheets
Which do consigne and send them unto death.

When boyes go first to bed,
They step into their voluntarie graves,
Sleep bindes them fast; onely their breath
Makes them not dead.
Successive nights, like rolling waves,
Convey them quickly who are bound for death.

When youth is frank and free,
And calls for musick while his veins do swell,
All day exchanging mirth and breath
In companie,
That musick summons to the knell
Which shall befriend him at the house of death.

When man grows staid and wise,
Getting a house and home where he may move
Within the circle of his breath,
Schooling his eyes,
That dumbe inclosure maketh love
Unto the coffin that attends his death.

When age grows low and weak,
Marking his grave, and thawing ev'ry yeare,
Till all do melt and drown his breath
When he would speak,
A chair or litter shows the biere
Which shall convey him to the house of death.

Man ere he is aware
Hath put together a solemnitie,
And drest his herse while he has breath
As yet to spare.
Yet Lord, instruct us so to die
That all these dyings may be life in death.

DEATH

Death, thou wast once an uncouth hideous thing,
Nothing but bones,
The sad effect of sadder grones;
Thy mouth was open but thou couldst not sing.

For we consider'd thee as at some six
Or ten yeares hence,
After the losse of life and sense,
Flesh being turn'd to dust, and bones to sticks.

We lookt on this side of thee, shooting short;
Where we did finde
The shells of fledge souls left behinde,
Dry dust, which sheds no tears but may extort.

But since our Saviour's death did put some bloud
Into thy face,
Thou art grown fair and full of grace,
Much in request, much sought for as a good.

For we do now behold thee gay and glad,
As at dooms-day;
When souls shall wear their new aray,
And all thy bones with beautie shall be clad.

Therefore we can go die as sleep, and trust
Half that we have
Unto an honest faithfull grave,
Making our pillows either down or dust.

DOOMS-DAY

Come away,
Make no delay.
Summon all the dust to rise,
Till it stirre and rubbe the eyes,
While this member jogs the other,
Each one whispring, *Live you brother?*

Come away,
Make this the day.
Dust, alas, no musick feels
But thy trumpet, then it kneels;
As peculiar notes and strains
Cure Tarantulaes raging pains.

Come away,
O make no stay!
Let the graves make their confession,
Lest at length they plead possession.
Fleshes stubbornnesse may have
Read that lesson to the grave.

Come away,
Thy flock doth stray.
Some to windes their bodie lend,
And in them may drown a friend;
Some in noisome vapours grow
To a plague and publick wo.

Come away,
Help our decay.
Man is out of order hurl'd,
Parcel'd out to all the world.
Lord, thy broken consort raise,
And the musick shall be praise.

JUDGEMENT

ALMIGHTIE Judge, how shall poore wretches brook
Thy dreadfull look,
Able a heart of iron to appall,
When thou shalt call
For ev'ry man's peculiar book?

What others mean to do, I know not well;
Yet I heare tell,
That some will turn thee to some leaves therein
So void of sinne
That they in merit shall excell.

But I resolve, when thou shalt call for mine,
That to decline,
And thrust a Testament into thy hand;
Let that be scann'd.
There thou shalt finde my faults are thine.

HEAVEN

O WHO will show me those delights on high?
Echo. *I.*
Thou Echo, thou art mortall, all men know.
Echo. *No.*
Wert thou not born among the trees and leaves?
Echo. *Leaves.*
And are there any leaves that still abide?
Echo. *Bide.*
What leaves are they? Impart the matter wholly.
Echo. *Holy.*
Are holy leaves the Echo then of blisse?
Echo. *Yes.*
Then tell me, what is that supreme delight?
Echo. *Light.*
Light to the minde; what shall the will enjoy?
Echo. *Joy.*
But are there cares and businesse with the pleasure?
Echo. *Leisure.*
Light, joy, and leisure; but shall they persever?
Echo. *Ever.*

V

THE INNER LIFE

PREFACE

IN the poems to which I have ventured to give the title of THE INNER LIFE we for the first time meet the poetic modes most characteristic of Herbert's temperament. Other poets before Herbert had written reflective verse, sagaciously instructing or meditating on the perplexing intricacy of divine and human things. Southwell, Ralegh, Donne, were Herbert's predecessors in such holy anatomy. Southwell largely and other men in single poems had celebrated the institutions of the Church, though conceiving them in no such personal way as Herbert. But the religious love-lyric, which begins with this Group and fills all the remainder except Group VIII, was developed by Herbert. Not that the type did not already exist in the Latin poetry of the Mediaeval Church. Poets, too, of France and Germany had again and again put tender communings with God into their vernacular speech. In England translations of the Psalms were common, and Hymns — the average pious utterance of a multitude — were just coming into use. Nothing altogether new ever appears on earth. The most original writer creates his novelty out of what already exists. Yet by bringing tend-

encies to full expression he still genuinely produces. So Herbert produced a new species of English poetry, a species so common since his time and through his influence that we now forget that a Herbert was required for its production.

The character of this new poetry, I have elsewhere fully discussed and I need here only summarize it. Herbert's immediate predecessors had developed the love-lyric to an exquisite and often artificial perfection. As the mediaeval painter found a set subject in the Madonna and Child, and to a subject not his own gave his personal stamp through small refinements of treatment, so did the Elizabethan and Jacobean poet find in the languishing lover a subject set to his hand. That the poets themselves did sometimes veritably languish, no one will doubt. But whether instructed by experience or engaged in exploiting a theme, they one and all bring before us the exalted lady with a heart colder than is nowadays customary, a heart which when once engaged is easily alienated, and of whose slightest favor the miserable lover knows himself to be perpetually unworthy. Through long sequences of lyrics — sonnets commonly, less frequently verse of looser structure — every stage is worked out in the slow approach of the undeserving to the exalted one. To us moderns, who feel but slightly the impulse to imaginative construction, such detailed exhibits of all the possible phases of longing, hope, and despair appear strange

when presented by serious and middle-aged men. The intellectual fashions of one age are hard for another to comprehend.

To Herbert these fashions were matters of course. From them he was able to detach himself only sufficiently to condemn the objects loved, but not to change the methods of representing love itself. A literary artist through and through, rejoicing in refinements, feeling no antagonism between cool study and vivid emotion, ever ready to note whatever shade of feeling a situation demanded and to develop it from germs of his own, Herbert brings over into the religious field the heart-searchings, the sighs, and the self-accusations which hitherto had belonged to secular love. Yet he is no trifler. Over-intellectualism is always his danger. He merely undertakes to treat as literary material the dealings of God and his own heart; and in this new field of love he follows the beautiful shimmering methods which Shakespeare had taught him in his devotion to the lovely youth, or Spenser in his service of the nameless lady. During the interval, too, which parts the second Stuart from Elizabeth, the national temper had changed and grown profoundly introspective and grave. Herbert is contrasted with Breton and Campion as Browning with Burns.

Grouped together here, then, — so far as these can be parted from the similarly minded verses of preceding sections, — are all the poems which

Herbert wrote at Cambridge in which his changing moods of mind are studied and heightened for the purpose of reflecting vicissitudes in his love of God. Beginning with a few glad notes, he quickly perceives in THE THANKSGIVING and THE REPRISALL how incompetent he is at his best to make gifts worthy of Him whom he adores. In THE SINNER, DENIALL, and CHURCH-LOCK AND KEY, he acknowledges that the failure of God to smile upon him is due to radical faults in himself; faults which in NATURE and REPENTANCE seem to connect themselves with specific acts of wrong-doing which in the Bemerton days the third stanza of THE PILGRIMAGE recalls. The poems which follow are akin to these in their lamentations of instability. At the close I have hung that *wreathed garland* which he hopes may even in his *crooked, winding wayes* express his tender reverence.

OUR LIFE IS HID WITH CHRIST IN GOD

(COLOSSIANS III, 3)

My words and thoughts do both expresse this notion,
That *Life* hath with the sun a double motion;
The first *Is* straight, and our diurnall friend,
The other *Hid*, and doth obliquely bend.
One life is wrapt *In* flesh, and tends to earth;
The other winds towards *Him* whose happie birth
Taught me to live here so *That* still one eye
Should aim and shoot at that which *Is* on high,
Quitting with daily labour all *My* pleasure,
To gain at harvest an eternall *Treasure.*

MATTENS

I CANNOT ope mine eyes
But thou art ready there to catch
My morning-soul and sacrifice;
Then we must needs for that day make a match.

My God, what is a heart?
Silver, or gold, or precious stone,
Or starre, or rainbow, or a part
Of all these things, or all of them in one?

My God, what is a heart,
That thou shouldst it so eye and wooe,
Powring upon it all thy art,
As if that thou hadst nothing els to do?

Indeed man's whole estate
Amounts (and richly) to serve thee.
He did not heav'n and earth create,
Yet studies them, not him by whom they be.

Teach me thy love to know,
That this new light, which now I see,
May both the work and workman show.
Then by a sunne-beam I will climbe to thee.

THE THANKSGIVING

Oh King of grief! (A title strange, yet true,
To thee of all kings onely due.)
Oh King of wounds! How shall I grieve for thee,
Who in all grief preventest me?
Shall I weep bloud? Why thou hast wept such store
That all thy body was one doore.
Shall I be scourged, flouted, boxed, sold?
'T is but to tell the tale is told.
My God, my God, why dost thou part from me?
Was such a grief as cannot be.
Shall I then sing, skipping thy dolefull storie,
And side with thy triumphant glorie?
Shall thy strokes be my stroking? Thorns, my flower?
Thy rod, my posie? Crosse, my bower?

But how then shall I imitate thee and
Copie thy fair, though bloudie hand?
Surely I will revenge me on thy love,
And trie who shall victorious prove.
If thou dost give me wealth, I will restore
All back unto thee by the poore.
If thou dost give me honour, men shall see
The honour doth belong to thee.
I will not marry; or, if she be mine,
She and her children shall be thine.
My bosome friend if he blaspheme thy name,
I will tear thence his love and fame.
One half of me being gone, the rest I give
Unto some Chappell, die or live.
As for thy passion — But of that anon,
When with the other I have done.
For thy predestination I'le contrive
That three yeares hence, if I survive,
I'le build a spittle, or mend common wayes,
But mend mine own without delayes.

Then I will use the works of thy creation
As if I us'd them but for fashion.
The world and I will quarrell, and the yeare
Shall not perceive that I am here.
My musick shall finde thee, and ev'ry string
Shall have his attribute to sing,
That all together may accord in thee,
And prove one God, one harmonie.
It thou shalt give me wit, it shall appeare;
If thou hast giv'n it me, 't is here.
Nay, I will reade thy book and never move
Till I have found therein thy love,
Thy art of love, which I'le turn back on thee:
O my deare Saviour, Victorie!
Then for thy passion — I will do for that —
Alas, my God, I know not what.

THE REPRISALL

I HAVE consider'd it, and finde
There is no dealing with thy mighty passion;
For though I die for thee, I am behinde.
My sinnes deserve the condemnation.

O make me innocent, that I
May give a disentangled state and free.
And yet thy wounds still my attempts defie,
For by thy death I die for thee.

Ah, was it not enough that thou
By thy eternall glorie didst outgo me?
Couldst thou not grief's sad conquests me allow,
But in all vict'ries overthrow me?

Yet by confession will I come
Into the conquest. Though I can do nought
Against thee, in thee I will overcome
The man who once against thee fought.

THE SINNER

Lord, how I am all ague when I seek
What I have treasur'd in my memorie!
Since if my soul make even with the week,
Each seventh note by right is due to thee.
I finde there quarries of pil'd vanities,
But shreds of holinesse, that dare not venture
To shew their face, since crosse to thy decrees.
There the circumference earth is, heav'n the centre.
In so much dregs the quintessence is small;
The spirit and good extract of my heart
Comes to about the many hundredth part.
Yet Lord restore thine image, heare my call!
And though my hard heart scarce to thee can grone,
Remember that thou once didst write in stone.

DENIALL

WHEN my devotions could not pierce
Thy silent eares,
Then was my heart broken, as was my verse.
My breast was full of fears
And disorder.

My bent thoughts, like a brittle bow,
Did flie asunder.
Each took his way: some would to pleasures go
Some to the warres and thunder
Of alarms.

As good go any where, they say,
As to benumme
Both knees and heart in crying night and day,
Come, come, my God, O come!
But no hearing.

O that thou shouldst give dust a tongue
To crie to thee,
And then not heare it crying! All day long
My heart was in my knee,
But no hearing.

Therefore my soul lay out of sight,
Untun'd, unstrung.
My feeble spirit, unable to look right,
Like a nipt blossome hung
Discontented.

O cheer and tune my heartlesse breast,
Deferre no time.
That so thy favours granting my request,
They and my minde may chime,
And mend my ryme.

CHURCH-LOCK AND KEY

I KNOW it is my sinne which locks thine eares
And bindes thy hands,
Out-crying my requests, drowning my tears,
Or else the chilnesse of my faint demands.

But as cold hands are angrie with the fire
And mend it still,
So I do lay the want of my desire
Not on my sinnes or coldnesse, but thy will.

Yet heare, O God, onely for his bloud's sake
Which pleads for me;
For though sinnes plead too, yet like stones they make
His bloud's sweet current much more loud to be.

NATURE

Full of rebellion, I would die,
Or fight, or travell, or denie
That thou hast ought to do with me.
O tame my heart!
It is thy highest art
To captivate strong holds to thee.

If thou shalt let this venome lurk
And in suggestions fume and work,
My soul will turn to bubbles straight,
And thence by kinde
Vanish into a winde,
Making thy workmanship deceit.

O smooth my rugged heart, and there
Engrave thy rev'rend law and fear!
Or make a new one, since the old
Is saplesse grown,
And a much fitter stone
To hide my dust then thee to hold.

REPENTANCE

Lord, I confesse my sinne is great;
Great is my sinne. Oh! gently treat
With thy quick flow'r, thy momentanie bloom,
Whose life still pressing
Is one undressing,
A steadie aiming at a tombe.

Man's age is two houres' work, or three.
Each day doth round about us see.
Thus are we to delights; but we are all
To sorrows old,
If life be told
From what life feeleth, Adam's fall.

O let thy height of mercie then
Compassionate short-breathed men!
Cut me not off for my most foul transgression.
I do confesse
My foolishnesse;
My God, accept of my confession.

Sweeten at length this bitter bowl
Which thou hast pour'd into my soul.
Thy wormwood turn to health, windes to fair weather;
For if thou stay,
I and this day,
As we did rise, we die together.

When thou for sinne rebukest man,
Forthwith he waxeth wo and wan.
Bitternesse fills our bowels; all our hearts
Pine and decay,
And drop away,
And carrie with them th' other parts.

But thou wilt sinne and grief destroy,
That so the broken bones may joy,
And tune together in a well-set song,
Full of his praises
Who dead men raises.
Fractures well cur'd make us more strong.

UNKINDNESSE

Lord, make me coy and tender to offend.
In friendship, first I think if that agree
Which I intend
Unto my friend's intent and end.
I would not use a friend as I use Thee.

If any touch my friend, or his good name,
It is my honour and my love to free
His blasted fame
From the least spot or thought of blame.
I could not use a friend as I use Thee.

My friend may spit upon my curious floore.
Would he have gold? I lend it instantly;
But let the poore,
And thou within them, starve at doore.
I cannot use a friend as I use Thee.

When that my friend pretendeth to a place,
I quit my interest and leave it free.
But when thy grace
Sues for my heart, I thee displace,
Nor would I use a friend as I use Thee.

Yet can a friend what thou hast done fulfill?
O write in brasse, *My God upon a tree*
His bloud did spill
Onely to purchase my good-will;
Yet use I not my foes as I use thee.

GRACE

My stock lies dead, and no increase
Doth my dull husbandrie improve.
O let thy graces without cease
Drop from above!

If still the sunne should hide his face,
Thy house would but a dungeon prove,
Thy works night's captives. O let grace
Drop from above!

The dew doth ev'ry morning fall,
And shall the dew out-strip thy dove?
The dew, for which grasse cannot call,
Drop from above.

Death is still working like a mole,
And digs my grave at each remove;
Let grace work too, and on my soul
Drop from above.

Sinne is still hammering my heart
Unto a hardnesse void of love;
Let suppling grace, to crosse his art,
Drop from above.

O come! For thou dost know the way.
Or if to me thou wilt not move,
Remove me where I need not say,
Drop from above.

THE TEMPER

It cannot be. Where is that mightie joy
  Which just now took up all my heart?
  Lord, if thou must needs use thy dart,
Save that and me, or sin for both destroy.

The grosser world stands to thy word and art;
  But thy diviner world of grace
  Thou suddenly dost raise and race,
And ev'ry day a new Creatour art.

O fix thy chair of grace, that all my powers
  May also fix their reverence;
  For when thou dost depart from hence,
They grow unruly and sit in thy bowers.

Scatter, or binde them all to bend to thee.
  Though elements change and heaven move,
  Let not thy higher Court remove,
But keep a standing Majestie in me.

THE TEMPER

How should I praise thee, Lord! How should my rymes
Gladly engrave thy love in steel,
If what my soul doth feel sometimes,
My soul might ever feel!

Although there were some fourtie heav'ns, or more,
Sometimes I peere above them all;
Sometimes I hardly reach a score,
Sometimes to hell I fall.

O rack me not to such a vast extent,
Those distances belong to thee.
The world's too little for thy tent,
A grave too big for me.

Wilt thou meet arms with man, that thou dost
stretch
A crumme of dust from heav'n to hell?
Will great God measure with a wretch?
Shall he thy stature spell?

O let me, when thy roof my soul hath hid,
O let me roost and nestle there;
Then of a sinner thou art rid,
And I of hope and fear.

Yet take thy way, for sure thy way is best,
Stretch or contract me thy poore debter.
This is but tuning of my breast,
To make the musick better.

Whether I flie with angels, fall with dust,
Thy hands made both, and I am there.
Thy power and love, my love and trust,
Make one place ev'ry where.

A WREATH

A WREATHED garland of deserved praise,
Of praise deserved, unto thee I give,
I give to thee who knowest all my wayes,
My crooked winding wayes, wherein I live.
Wherein I die, not live; for life is straight,
Straight as a line, and ever tends to thee,
To thee, who art more farre above deceit
Then deceit seems above simplicitie.
Give me simplicitie, that I may live;
So live and like, that I may know, thy wayes,
Know them and practise them. Then shall I give
For this poore wreath, give thee a crown of praise.

VI

THE CRISIS

PREFACE

A NEW period in the life of Herbert now begins, a period marked by a change of residence and covering approximately the years 1626–30. During these years the opposing forces of his nature came into open conflict and brought him distress of mind and of body.

By birth, temperament, and many circumstances of his life, Herbert was impelled to a life of fashion, enjoyment, and irresponsible self-culture. "He took content in beauty, wit, musick and pleasant conversation." He knew the ways of learning, honor, and pleasure. Easily he answered to the calls of *honour, riches, and fair eyes.* Coming of a noble family, Walton says, "he kept himself at too great a distance with all his inferiours, and his cloaths seemd to prove that he put too great a value on his parts and Parentage." His early biographer, Oley, despairs of describing "that person of his, which afforded so unusual a contessaration of elegancies and singularities to the beholder." His eldest brother, Edward, after years of romantic adventure on the Continent, was appointed ambassador to the French Court. His favorite brother, Henry, was Master of the Revels at the English Court. Three other brothers were

in the public service. Several powerful noblemen besides his great kinsman, the Earl of Pembroke, were his patrons. He was often at Court or with his uncle, the Earl of Danby. He indulged "a genteel humour for cloaths and Court-like company, and seldom look'd towards Cambridge unless the King were there, but then he never fail'd." In short, the favor of the great, the glitter of society, *the quick returns of courtesie and wit*, and all elegancies of speech, dress, and living, were congenial to him. On one side of his nature Herbert was a brilliant man of the world, a richly endowed child of the Renaissance.

Such a temperament inevitably induced secular ambition. After a time a bookish life became repulsive; for Herbert felt his powers, hated stagnation, and delighted in intellectual activity. In 1619, when he was well under way with his divinity studies, he turned aside to seek the Oratorship. This office he held for eight years. But he sought also to become an assistant Secretary of State. The Oratorship was the natural stepping-stone. Of the two preceding Orators, Sir Robert Naunton became Secretary of State, and Sir Francis Nethersole Secretary to the Queen of Bohemia. Sir Robert Creighton, who followed Herbert, became a Bishop. Both predecessor and successor at Bemerton became Bishops. But in 1625 Herbert's political hopes approached an end; for in that year the king died, and within the

following year the whole group of nobles, Lord Bacon included, to whom Herbert had looked for support. A year later came the saddest death of all, that of his mother. Herbert immediately resigned the Oratorship, and seriously faced the problems which a disorganized life had induced.

Up to about 1627 he had blindly drifted — under the guidance of what Walton styles "his natural elegance of behaviour, tongue, and pen" — toward social eminence. The liking for stately pleasures and fashionable distinction had ever a strong, and hitherto a controlling, influence over him. But the changed conditions brought about by the death of his friends set free another force which he had always felt as profounder and more really authoritative, the force of religion, — religion to be exercised in the service of the Church. From childhood Herbert knew himself to be a dedicated soul, and inwardly, even in his most dilatory waywardness, he approved the dedication. Side by side with his fashionable tastes he had a veritable genius for religion. His feeble frame precluded his entering the army or any hardy profession. Oley says that "he was dedicated to serve God in his sanctuary before he was born." In THE GLANCE he himself tells how in *the midst of youth* he had felt *God's gracious eye look on him.* At Westminster School questions of religious controversy had engaged him. In a letter of 1617 he speaks of *now setting foot into Divinity, to lay the platform of my future*

life, and thus of *obeying that spirit which hath guided me hitherto, and of atchieving my holy ends.* In a letter of 1622 to his mother he fears sickness as something which has made him *unable to perform those offices for which I came into the world and must yet be kept in it.* Of the poems printed in the first five Groups, a majority must have been written during these very years of courtly aspiration. Such incongruities were not exceptional in men of the later Renaissance, nor is there the least reason to doubt that underneath all his *gaynesses* he truly loved God. His God — a poet's God — was highly personal, individual even; but only in union with Him could Herbert find peace. His very wealth of nature made him feel the more keenly the weight of chance desires. Beauty and order were in his Platonic soul. He did not wish to be his own master, but rather through divine obedience to escape from personal caprice.

Early, too, in his boyhood, through his consecration to the priesthood by his pious and masterful mother, he had formed an inseparable association between being holy and becoming a priest. Whether this association was wise, we need not ask. It controlled Herbert's life, and hence is important to understand. Catholics sometimes speak of the call "to become a religious;" by which phrase they intend not merely becoming heavenly minded, but becoming a monk or nun. The two aims are in their thought indistinguishable. I have known

Protestant young persons who thought they must withhold their hearts from God until they should be willing to become missionaries, or to meet some other external standard which in a more or less arbitrary way had become connected in their minds with holiness. Entering the priesthood was Herbert's test, and in his instinctive thought it was fully identified with allegiance to God. In terms of it allegiance and faithlessness were estimated. While he always professedly maintained this ultimate purpose, whenever he felt responsibility irksome and was inclined to drift with the fashionable tide, he found excuses for delaying the great act. And when he experienced the emptiness of living by the day and longed for the eternal, the call to the priesthood became once more imperative. Little can be understood in the verse or life of Herbert unless we bear in mind that in his consciousness there was complete identification of submission to God and acceptance of the priesthood.

Such, then, are the opposing forces, long at work, whose fierce and open conflict at a crisis period Herbert here records. The love of elegant pleasure, whose issue is secular ambition, contends with the love of God, whose embodiment is the priesthood. Both are alike unforced and genuine passions. Rightly or wrongly they are regarded by Herbert as fundamentally incompatible. He never doubts which of the two must ultimately win, but

at any particular moment he dreads the final decision. *My soul doth love thee, yet it loves delay.* The man is double-minded. In such a struggle, without regard to whether we approve the assumed antithesis, we must see that there is magnificent poetic material. Such Herbert found it. As an artist, in whom feeling is not falsified by representation, he watched every stage of the contest and recorded it with poignant splendor. Peculiar and possibly distorted emotions which sprang up in a single mind under special conditions of time, family, and belief, he fashioned into pictures of such universal and perpetual beauty that men of alien ideals have for three centuries been able to find in these experiences subtle interpretations of their own.

Ellis, in his Specimens of English Poetry, remarks that "nature intended Herbert for a knight-errant, but disappointed ambition made him a saint." That is as misleading a half-truth as Ferrar's declaration in his Epistle to the Reader that Herbert was impelled altogether by "inward enforcements, for outward there was none." While unquestionably the priesthood was his accepted aim from childhood, he spent most of the last third of his life in trying to avoid it, and it is doubtful if he would ever have reached it had not events between 1625 and 1629 obstructed other courses. His inclination to enter the service of God, however, was just as genuine as was his disposition to

find excuses for delay. He *could not go away nor persevere*. That is his own judgment as expressed in his three principal autobiographic poems,— AFFLICTION, included in this Group, LOVE UNKNOWN and THE PILGRIMAGE of Group IX.

In an essay on the Life of Herbert I have gone over the events of this Crisis period with some care, and shown how they cooperated to bring about his final decision for the priesthood. Epitomizing them here, I may mention the increased interest in religious things, partly causing and partly caused by his rebuilding of Leighton Church; the wreck of his political hopes, brought about by the death of the King and his own noble patrons; the reproachful loss of his mother, who had been his chief incitement to the priesthood; the resignation of the Oratorship, and his withdrawal from the University. The mental conflicts attending these events threw him into serious illness. He went into retirement. A severe course of fasting saved his life, but left his health shattered. During this retirement the poems constituting the present Group, with possibly a few included in earlier Groups, were written. Near the close of the period, in March, 1629, at Edingdon Church, he suddenly married Jane Danvers, a daughter of the cousin of his stepfather. There is no mention of her in his verse, unless in one dark line of THE PILGRIMAGE.

When, in 1630, the Rectory of Fuggleston-cum-

Bemerton became vacant, the Earl of Pembroke induced the King to offer it to George Herbert. Though Herbert had already "put on a resolution for the Clergy," a month's hesitation followed. Then at a friend's persuasion he paid a visit to the Earl at Wilton House, where at that time the King and Laud also were. "That night," says Walton, "the Earl acquainted Dr. Laud with his Kinsman's irresolution. And the Bishop did the next day so convince Mr. Herbert that the refusal of it was a sin, that a Taylor was sent for to come speedily from Salisbury to Wilton to take measure and make him Canonical Cloaths against next day; which the Taylor did ; and Mr. Herbert being so habited, went with his presentation to the learned Dr. Davenant, who was then Bishop of Salisbury, and he gave him Institution immediately." This was April 26, 1630. Five months later he received formal Ordination and came to live at Bemerton. He had just reached his thirty-eighth year when he began to carry out his lifelong purpose.

At the beginning of the Group which describes this struggle I place EASTER WINGS and the long AFFLICTION ; the latter written, I believe, as late as 1628 and well summarizing the whole period of turmoil. Three poems follow, expressing political disappointment and the sense of depression in being cast aside. In two or three pieces there is repentance for a particular past sin. Then begins the debate over taking final Orders, extending

through half a dozen pieces and culminating in PEACE, THE PEARL, OBEDIENCE, THE ROSE, and AN OFFERING. The Series closes with two songs of gladness and one of tender distrust of his own desert.

EASTER WINGS

Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store,
  Though foolishly he lost the same,
    Decaying more and more
      Till he became
        Most poore;
        With thee
      O let me rise
    As larks, harmoniously,
  And sing this day thy victories;
Then shall the fall further the flight in me.

EASTER WINGS

My tender age in sorrow did beginne;
And still with sicknesses and shame
Thou didst so punish sinne,
That I became
Most thinne.
With thee
Let me combine,
And feel this day thy victorie;
For if I imp my wing on thine,
Affliction shall advance the flight in me.

AFFLICTION

When first thou didst entice to thee my heart,
I thought the service brave;
So many joyes I writ down for my part,
Besides what I might have
Out of my stock of naturall delights,
Augmented with thy gracious benefits.

I looked on thy furniture so fine,
And made it fine to me;
Thy glorious houshold-stuffe did me entwine,
And 'tice me unto thee.
Such starres I counted mine; both heav'n and earth
Payd me my wages in a world of mirth.

What pleasures could I want whose King I served?
Where joyes my fellows were.
Thus argu'd into hopes, my thoughts reserved
No place for grief or fear.
Therefore my sudden soul caught at the place,
And made her youth and fiercenesse seek thy face.

At first thou gav'st me milk and sweetnesses;
I had my wish and way.
My dayes were straw'd with flow'rs and happinesse,
There was no moneth but May.
But with my yeares sorrow did twist and grow,
And made a partie unawares for wo.

My flesh began unto my soul in pain,
Sicknesses cleave my bones;
Consuming agues dwell in ev'ry vein,
And tune my breath to grones.
Sorrow was all my soul; I scarce beleeved,
Till grief did tell me roundly, that I lived.

When I got health thou took'st away my life,
And more; for my friends die.
My mirth and edge was lost; a blunted knife
Was of more use then I.
Thus thinne and lean, without a fence or friend,
I was blown through with ev'ry storm and winde.

Whereas my birth and spirit rather took
The way that takes the town,
Thou didst betray me to a lingring book
And wrap me in a gown.
I was entangled in the world of strife
Before I had the power to change my life.

Yet, for I threatned oft the siege to raise,
Not simpring all mine age,
Thou often didst with Academick praise
Melt and dissolve my rage.
I took thy sweetned pill till I came neare;
I could not go away, nor persevere.

Yet lest perchance I should too happie be
In my unhappinesse,
Turning my purge to food, thou throwest me
Into more sicknesses.
Thus doth thy power crosse-bias me, not making
Thine own gift good, yet me from my wayes taking.

Now I am here, what thou wilt do with me
None of my books will show.
I reade, and sigh, and wish I were a tree,
For sure then I should grow
To fruit or shade. At least some bird would trust
Her houshold to me, and I should be just.

Yet, though thou troublest me, I must be meek;
In weaknesse must be stout.
Well, I will change the service and go seek
Some other master out.
Ah my deare God! Though I am clean forgot,
Let me not love thee if I love thee not.

EMPLOYMENT

If as a flowre doth spread and die,
Thou wouldst extend me to some good,
Before I were by frost's extremitie
Nipt in the bud,

The sweetnesse and the praise were thine,
But the extension and the room
Which in thy garland I should fill, were mine
At thy great doom.

For as thou dost impart thy grace,
The greater shall our glorie be.
The measure of our joyes is in this place,
The stuffe with thee.

Let me not languish then, and spend
A life as barren to thy praise
As is the dust to which that life doth tend,
But with delaies.

All things are busie; onely I
Neither bring hony with the bees,
Nor flowres to make that, nor the husbandrie
To water these.

I am no link of thy great chain,
But all my companie is a weed.
Lord place me in thy consort; give one strain
To my poore reed.

THE ANSWER

My comforts drop and melt away like snow.
I shake my head, and all the thoughts and ends,
Which my fierce youth did bandie, fall and flow
Like leaves about me; or like summer friends,
Flyes of estates and sunne-shine. But to all
Who think me eager, hot, and undertaking,
But in my prosecutions slack and small —
As a young exhalation, newly waking,
Scorns his first bed of dirt, and means the sky,
But cooling by the way, grows pursie and slow,
And setling to a cloud, doth live and die
In that dark state of tears — to all that so
Show me and set me, I have one reply:
Which they that know the rest, know more then I.

CONTENT

Peace mutt'ring thoughts, and do not grudge to keep
Within the walls of your own breast.
Who cannot on his own bed sweetly sleep,
Can on another's hardly rest.

Gad not abroad at ev'ry quest and call
Of an untrained hope or passion.
To court each place or fortune that doth fall
Is wantonnesse in contemplation.

Mark how the fire in flints doth quiet lie,
Content and warm t' it self alone;
But when it would appeare to others' eye,
Without a knock it never shone.

Give me the pliant minde, whose gentle measure
Complies and suits with all estates;
Which can let loose to a crown, and yet with pleasure
Take up within a cloister's gates.

This soul doth span the world, and hang content
From either pole unto the centre;
Where in each room of the well-furnisht tent
He lies warm and without adventure.

The brags of life are but a nine dayes' wonder.
And after death the fumes that spring
From private bodies make as big a thunder
As those which rise from a huge King.

Onely thy Chronicle is lost; and yet
Better by worms be all once spent
Then to have hellish moths still gnaw and fret
Thy name in books, which may not rent:

When all thy deeds, whose brunt thou feel'st alone,
Are chaw'd by others' pens and tongue;
And as their wit is, their digestion,
Thy nourisht fame is weak or strong.

Then cease discoursing, soul. Till thine own ground,
Do not thy self or friends importune.
He that by seeking hath himself once found
Hath ever found a happie fortune.

VANITIE

Poore silly soul, whose hope and head lies low,
Whose flat delights on earth do creep and grow,
To whom the starres shine not so fair as eyes,
Nor solid work as false embroyderies;
Heark and beware, lest what you now do measure
And write for sweet, prove a most sowre displeasure.
O heare betimes, lest thy relenting
May come too late!
To purchase heaven for repenting
Is no hard rate.
If souls be made of earthly mold,
Let them love gold;
If born on high,
Let them unto their kindred flie.
For they can never be at rest
Till they regain their ancient nest.
Then silly soul take heed, for earthly joy
Is but a bubble and makes thee a boy.

FRAILTIE

Lord, in my silence how do I despise
What upon trust
Is styled *honour*, *riches*, or *fair eyes*,
But is *fair dust!*
I surname them *guilded clay*,
Deare earth, *fine grasse* or *hay*.
In all, I think my foot doth ever tread
Upon their head.

But when I view abroad both Regiments,
The world's and thine;
Thine clad with simplenesse and sad events,
The other fine,
Full of glorie and gay weeds,
Brave language, braver deeds;
That which was dust before doth quickly rise,
And prick mine eyes.

O brook not this, lest if what even now
My foot did tread,
Affront those joyes wherewith thou didst endow
And long since wed
My poore soul, ev'n sick of love,
It may a Babel prove
Commodious to conquer heav'n and thee
Planted in me.

ARTILLERIE

As I one ev'ning sat before my cell,
  Me thoughts a starre did shoot into my lap.
I rose and shook my clothes, as knowing well
  That from small fires comes oft no small mishap.
    When suddenly I heard one say,
    Do as thou usest, disobey,
Expell good motions from thy breast
Which have the face of fire, but end in rest.

I, who had heard of musick in the spheres,
  But not of speech in starres, began to muse.
But turning to my God, whose ministers
  The starres and all things are, If I refuse,
    Dread Lord, said I, so oft my good,
    Then I refuse not ev'n with bloud
To wash away my stubborn thought;
For I will do or suffer what I ought.

But I have also starres and shooters too,
  Born where thy servants both artilleries use.
My tears and prayers night and day do wooe
  And work up to thee, yet thou dost refuse.
    Not but I am (I must say still)
    Much more oblig'd to do thy will
Then thou to grant mine, but because
Thy promise now hath ev'n set thee thy laws.

Then we are shooters both, and thou dost deigne
  To enter combate with us and contest
With thine own clay. But I would parley fain.
  Shunne not my arrows, and behold my breast.
    Yet if thou shunnest, I am thine;
    I must be so, if I am mine.
There is no articling with thee.
I am but finite, yet thine infinitely.

THE STARRE

Bright spark, shot from a brighter place,
Where beams surround my Saviour's face,
Canst thou be any where
So well as there?

Yet if thou wilt from thence depart,
Take a bad lodging in my heart;
For thou canst make a debter,
And make it better.

First with thy fire-work burn to dust
Folly, and worse then folly, lust.
Then with thy light refine,
And make it shine:

So disengag'd from sinne and sicknesse,
Touch it with thy celestiall quicknesse,
That it may hang and move
After thy love.

Then with our trinitie of light,
Motion, and heat, let's take our flight
Unto the place where thou
Before didst bow.

Get me a standing there, and place
Among the beams which crown the face
Of him who dy'd to part
Sinne and my heart.

That so among the rest I may
Glitter, and curle, and winde as they;
That winding is their fashion
Of adoration.

Sure thou wilt joy, by gaining me,
To flie home like a laden bee
Unto that hive of beams
And garland-streams.

DIALOGUE

SWEETEST Saviour, if my soul
Were but worth the having,
Quickly should I then controll
Any thought of waving.
But when all my care and pains
Cannot give the name of gains
To thy wretch so full of stains,
What delight or hope remains?

What (childe) is the ballance thine,
Thine the poise and measure?
If I say, Thou shalt be mine,
Finger not my treasure.
What the gains in having thee
Do amount to, onely he
Who for man was sold can see,
That transferr'd th' accounts to me.

But as I can see no merit
Leading to this favour,
So the way to fit me for it
Is beyond my savour.
As the reason then is thine,
So the way is none of mine.
I disclaim the whole designe,
Sinne disclaims, and I resigne.

That is all, if that I could
Get without repining;
And my clay, my creature, would
Follow my resigning.
That as I did freely part
With my glorie and desert,
Left all joyes to feel all smart —
Ah, no more! Thou break'st my heart.

THE PRIESTHOOD

Blest Order, which in power dost so excell
That with th' one hand thou liftest to the sky
And with the other throwest down to hell
In thy just censures; fain would I draw nigh,
Fain put thee on, exchanging my lay-sword
For that of th' holy word.

But thou art fire, sacred and hallow'd fire,
And I but earth and clay. Should I presume
To wear thy habit, the severe attire
My slender compositions might consume.
I am both foul and brittle, much unfit
To deal in holy Writ.

Yet have I often seen, by cunning hand
And force of fire, what curious things are made
Of wretched earth. Where once I scorn'd to stand
That earth is fitted by the fire and trade
Of skilfull artists for the boards of those
Who make the bravest shows.

But since those great ones, be they ne're so great,
Come from the earth from whence those vessels come;
So that at once both feeder, dish, and meat
Have one beginning and one finall summe;
I do not greatly wonder at the sight,
If earth in earth delight.

But th' holy men of God such vessels are
As serve him up who all the world commands.
When God vouchsafeth to become our fare,
Their hands convey him who conveys their hands.
O what pure things, most pure, must those things be
Who bring my God to me!

Wherefore I dare not, I, put forth my hand
To hold the Ark, although it seem to shake
Through th' old sinnes and new doctrines of our land.
Onely since God doth often vessels make
Of lowly matter for high uses meet,
I throw me at his feet.

There will I lie untill my Maker seek
For some mean stuffe whereon to show his skill.
Then is my time. The distance of the meek
Doth flatter power. Lest good come short of ill
In praising might, the poore do by submission
What pride by opposition.

PEACE

Sweet Peace, where dost thou dwell? I humbly crave
Let me once know.
I sought thee in a secret cave,
And ask'd if Peace were there.
A hollow winde did seem to answer, No:
Go seek elsewhere.

I did, and going did a rainbow note.
Surely, thought I,
This is the lace of Peace's coat,
I will search out the matter.
But while I lookt, the clouds immediately
Did break and scatter.

Then went I to a garden and did spy
A gallant flower,
The crown Imperiall. Sure, said I,
Peace at the root must dwell.
But when I digg'd, I saw a worm devoure
What show'd so well.

At length I met a rev'rend good old man,
Whom when for Peace
I did demand, he thus began:
There was a Prince of old
At Salem dwelt, who liv'd with good increase
Of flock and fold.

He sweetly liv'd, yet sweetnesse did not save
His life from foes.
But after death out of his grave
There sprang twelve stalks of wheat;
Which many wondring at, got some of those
To plant and set.

It prosper'd strangely and did soon disperse
Through all the earth;
For they that taste it do rehearse
That vertue lies therein,
A secret vertue bringing peace and mirth
By flight of sinne.

Take of this grain, which in my garden grows
And grows for you,
Make bread of it; and that repose
And peace which ev'rywhere
With so much earnestnesse you do pursue
Is onely there.

THE PEARL

(MATTHEW XIII, 45)

I KNOW the wayes of learning, both the head
  And pipes that feed the presse, and make it runne;
What reason hath from nature borrowed,
  Or of it self, like a good huswife, spunne
In laws and policie; what the starres conspire;
What willing nature speaks, what forc'd by fire;
  Both th' old discoveries and the new-found seas,
The stock and surplus, cause and historie;
  All these stand open, or I have the keyes;
    Yet I love thee.

I know the wayes of honour, what maintains
  The quick returns of courtesie and wit;
In vies of favours whether partie gains
  When glorie swells the heart, and moldeth it
To all expressions both of hand and eye,
Which on the world a true-love-knot may tie,
  And bear the bundle wheresoe're it goes;
How many drammes of spirit there must be
  To sell my life unto my friends or foes;
    Yet I love thee.

I know the wayes of pleasure, the sweet strains,
The lullings and the relishes of it;
The propositions of hot bloud and brains;
What mirth and musick mean; what love and wit
Have done these twentie hundred yeares and more;
I know the projects of unbridled store;
My stuffe is flesh, not brasse; my senses live,
And grumble oft that they have more in me
Then he that curbs them, being but one to five;
Yet I love thee.

I know all these and have them in my hand;
Therefore not sealed but with open eyes
I flie to thee, and fully understand
Both the main sale and the commodities;
And at what rate and price I have thy love,
With all the circumstances that may move.
Yet through the labyrinths, not my groveling wit,
But thy silk twist let down from heav'n to me
Did both conduct and teach me how by it
To climbe to thee.

OBEDIENCE

My God, if writings may
Convey a Lordship any way
Whither the buyer and the seller please,
Let it not thee displease
If this poore paper do as much as they.

On it my heart doth bleed
As many lines as there doth need
To passe it self and all it hath to thee;
To which I do agree,
And here present it as my speciall deed.

If that hereafter Pleasure
Cavill, and claim her part and measure,
As if this passed with a reservation,
Or some such words in fashion,
I here exclude the wrangler from thy treasure.

O let thy sacred will
All thy delight in me fulfill!
Let me not think an action mine own way,
But as thy love shall sway,
Resigning up the rudder to thy skill.

Lord, what is man to thee,
That thou shouldst minde a rotten tree?
Yet since thou canst not choose but see my actions,
So great are thy perfections,
Thou mayst as well my actions guide, as see.

Besides, thy death and bloud
Show'd a strange love to all our good.
Thy sorrows were in earnest; no faint proffer,
Or superficiall offer
Of what we might not take, or be withstood.

Wherefore I all forego.
To one word onely I say, No:
Where in the deed there was an intimation
Of a *gift* or *donation*,
Lord, let it now by way of *purchase* go.

He that will passe his land,
As I have mine, may set his hand
And heart unto this deed, when he hath read,
And make the purchase spread
To both our goods, if he to it will stand.

How happie were my part
If some kinde man would thrust his heart
Into these lines; till in heav'ns court of rolls
They were by winged souls
Entred for both, farre above their desert!

THE ROSE

Presse me not to take more pleasure
In this world of sugred lies,
And to use a larger measure
Then my strict, yet welcome size.

First, there is no pleasure here;
Colour'd griefs indeed there are,
Blushing woes, that look as cleare
As if they could beautie spare.

Or if such deceits there be,
Such delights I meant to say,
There are no such things to me,
Who have pass'd my right away.

But I will not much oppose
Unto what you now advise,
Onely take this gentle rose,
And therein my answer lies.

What is fairer then a rose?
What is sweeter? Yet it purgeth.
Purgings enmitie disclose,
Enmitie forbearance urgeth.

If then all that worldlings prize
Be contracted to a rose,
Sweetly there indeed it lies,
But it biteth in the close.

So this flower doth judge and sentence
Worldly joyes to be a scourge;
For they all produce repentance,
And repentance is a purge.

But I health, not physick choose.
Onely though I you oppose,
Say that fairly I refuse,
For my answer is a rose.

AN OFFERING

Come, bring thy gift. If blessings were as slow
As men's returns, what would become of fools?
What hast thou there? A heart? But is it pure?
Search well and see, for hearts have many holes.
Yet one pure heart is nothing to bestow.
In Christ two natures met to be thy cure.

O that within us hearts had propagation,
Since many gifts do challenge many hearts!
Yet one, if good, may title to a number,
And single things grow fruitfull by deserts.
In publick judgements one may be a nation
And fence a plague, while others sleep and slumber.

But all I fear is lest thy heart displease,
As neither good nor one. So oft divisions
Thy lusts have made, and not thy lusts alone;
Thy passions also have their set partitions.
These parcell out thy heart. Recover these,
And thou mayst offer many gifts in one.

There is a balsome, or indeed a bloud,
Dropping from heav'n, which doth both cleanse and close
All sorts of wounds; of such strange force it is.
Seek out this All-heal, and seek no repose
Untill thou finde and use it to thy good.
Then bring thy gift, and let thy hymne be this:

Since my sadnesse
Into gladnesse
Lord thou dost convert,
O accept
What thou hast kept,
As thy due desert.

Had I many,
Had I any,
(For this heart is none)
All were thine
And none of mine,
Surely thine alone.

Yet thy favour
May give savour
To this poore oblation;
And it raise
To be thy praise,
And be my salvation.

PRAISE

King of Glorie, King of Peace,
I will love thee.
And that love may never cease
I will move thee.

Thou hast granted my request,
Thou hast heard me.
Thou didst note my working breast,
Thou hast spar'd me.

Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee.
And the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee.

Though my sinnes against me cried,
Thou didst cleare me.
And alone, when they replied,
Thou didst heare me.

Sev'n whole dayes, not one in seven,
I will praise thee.
In my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee.

Thou grew'st soft and moist with tears,
Thou relentedst;
And when Justice call'd for fears
Thou dissentedst.

Small it is in this poore sort
To enroll thee.
Ev'n eternitie is too short
To extoll thee.

LOVE

Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back,
Guiltie of dust and sinne.
But quick-ey'd Love, observing me grow slack
From my first entrance in,
Drew nearer to me, sweetly questioning
If I lack'd any thing.

A guest, I answer'd, worthy to be here.
Love said, You shall be he.
I, the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my deare,
I cannot look on thee.
Love took my hand and smiling did reply,
Who made the eyes but I?

Truth Lord, but I have marr'd them; let my shame
Go where it doth deserve.
And know you not, sayes Love, who bore the blame?
My deare, then I will serve.
You must sit down, sayes Love, and taste my meat.
So I did sit and eat.

VII

THE HAPPY PRIEST

PREFACE

WITH this Group begins the last and briefest period of Herbert's life, a period remarkable for its productivity. It extends from his coming to Bemerton in 1630 to his death in 1633. In it THE COUNTRY PARSON was written and most of the eighty-six poems which here follow. No poem printed in Groups VII–XI is found in the Williams Manuscript, which I have elsewhere shown to have been probably drawn up about 1628. Some of these poems may proceed from the last years of the Crisis, but as they contain no reference to the struggle there described, I have not included them in that Group. Some, especially among those printed under the heading Bemerton Study, were probably written at least in part during the Cambridge years, and then, either by accident or design, were not copied into the manuscript lent to Ferrar in 1627–9. But substantially the poems of these five Groups are Bemerton poems. Their omission from the Williams Manuscript is *prima facie* evidence of date. Nearly all of them, outside Group VIII, contain allusions to the priestly character of the writer. Emotional depth and individual experience will be found in them to a degree unknown in the Cambridge period, and

they very generally look back to a past different from that in which their author is now living.

The beginning of the Bemerton life brought to Herbert a joyful sense of attainment. The hopes of many years seemed now about to be realized. The great deed was done. He was no longer cumbered with political, social, or scholarly ties. He and God were to be alone, and his one interest henceforth was to be the priestly office. He set himself with characteristic system to search out all the subtle significance which his present tasks might contain. His life should be as intellectually ordered, as coherent, as beautiful, as compact with rich suggestion, as his verse had been before. He codified his work; he studied from day to day what were the best ways of performing each petty portion of his stately office.

Walton gives a long account of Herbert's elaborate rationalization of the English ritual. This account is on its face open to doubt. How much of it proceeds from Herbert's mind, and how much from Walton's, is not clear. Walton had no acquaintance with Herbert, and this argumentative piece of history was written long after Herbert's death. Walton's Life, like that by Oley, was obviously intended to serve the useful purpose of an Anti-Puritan tract. But after all deductions, the argumentation seems well in keeping with Herbert's general temper. It is ever his way to make the most of what he finds at hand. He asks few

ultimate questions, but turns all that tradition hands down to him into something rich and meaningful. Throughout this account he justifies the services of his Church because of their reasonableness, and not because they are authoritatively prescribed; and this is his method in his poems and THE COUNTRY PARSON. There, as here, he grounds the practices of the collective Church on the needs of the individual soul. On the whole, then, I believe Walton's pages on ritual may be accepted as a fair account of Herbert's disposition during the Bemerton years. He tried to bring into action and fill with ingenious, independent, and reverent intelligence all the resources of his little world. By this poetic development of ritual he sought to do for his people what he was at the same time doing for himself in THE COUNTRY PARSON. He "made it appear to them that the whole Service of the Church was a reasonable, and therefore an acceptable, Sacrifice to God." Always to his mind the way to render life glorious was to stuff every portion of it with thought, and delightedly to detect compacted reason where the dull mind contents itself with seeing only plain fact.

The present Group of poems is the expression of exuberant joy in at last reaching a long hoped for good. Few other Groups have so lyric a quality. After some study of the conditions of the priesthood, he sees that these are all summed up in the priest's abandonment of everything that can be

called his own, and in his full absorption into the life of his Master. Such union, the realization of thoughts of love which had possessed him for many years, throws him into an intellectual ecstasy, and song after song is poured out expressing his delight. The ordinances of the Church, especially those connected with the Holy Supper, get a new meaning. The closing day is sacramental, and all the world resounds with God's praise.

THE CALL

Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life:
  Such a Way as gives us breath,
Such a Truth as ends all strife,
  Such a Life as killeth death.

Come, my Light, my Feast, my Strength:
  Such a Light as shows a feast,
Such a Feast as mends in length,
  Such a Strength as makes his guest.

Come, my Joy, my Love, my Heart:
  Such a Joy as none can move,
Such a Love as none can part,
  Such a Heart as joyes in love.

AARON

Holinesse on the head,
Light and perfections on the breast,
Harmonious bells below, raising the dead
To leade them unto life and rest;
Thus are true Aarons drest.

Profanenesse in my head,
Defects and darknesse in my breast,
A noise of passions ringing me for dead
Unto a place where is no rest;
Poore priest thus am I drest.

Onely another head
I have, another heart and breast,
Another musick, making live not dead,
Without whom I could have no rest;
In him I am well drest.

Christ is my onely head,
My alone onely heart and breast,
My onely musick, striking me ev'n dead,
That to the old man I may rest,
And be in him new drest.

So holy in my head,
Perfect and light in my deare breast,
My doctrine tun'd by Christ, (who is not dead,
But lives in me while I do rest,)
Come people! Aaron's drest.

THE WINDOWS

LORD, how can man preach thy eternall word?
He is a brittle crazie glasse,
Yet in thy temple thou dost him afford
This glorious and transcendent place
To be a window, through thy grace.

But when thou dost anneal in glasse thy storie,
Making thy life to shine within
The holy Preachers, then the light and glorie
More rev'rend grows, and more doth win;
Which else shows watrish, bleak, and thin.

Doctrine and life, colours and light, in one
When they combine and mingle, bring
A strong regard and aw; but speech alone
Doth vanish like a flaring thing,
And in the eare, not conscience ring.

THE HOLDFAST

I THREATNED to observe the strict decree
Of my deare God with all my power and might.
But I was told by one it could not be,
Yet I might trust in God to be my light.
Then will I trust, said I, in him alone.
Nay, ev'n to trust in him was also his;
We must confesse that nothing is our own.
Then I confesse that he my succour is.
But to have nought is ours, not to confesse
That we have nought. I stood amaz'd at this,
Much troubled, till I heard a friend expresse
That all things were more ours by being his.
What Adam had, and forfeited for all,
Christ keepeth now, who cannot fail or fall.

THE 23 PSALME

The God of love my shepherd is,
And he that doth me feed.
While he is mine and I am his,
What can I want or need?

He leads me to the tender grasse,
Where I both feed and rest,
Then to the streams that gently passe;
In both I have the best.

Or if I stray, he doth convert
And bring my minde in frame.
And all this not for my desert,
But for his holy name.

Yea, in death's shadie black abode
Well may I walk, not fear;
For thou art with me, and thy rod
To guide, thy staffe to bear.

Nay, thou dost make me sit and dine
Ev'n in my enemies' sight.
My head with oyl, my cup with wine
Runnes over day and night.

Surely thy sweet and wondrous love
Shall measure all my dayes;
And as it never shall remove,
So neither shall my praise.

THE ODOUR

(2 CORINTHIANS II, 15)

How sweetly doth *My Master* sound! *My Master!*
As Amber-greese leaves a rich sent
Unto the taster,
So do these words a sweet content,
An orientall fragrancie, *My Master.*

With these all day I do perfume my minde,
My minde ev'n thrust into them both,
That I might finde
What cordials make this curious broth,
This broth of smells, that feeds and fats my minde.

My Master, shall I speak? O that to thee
My servant were a little so,
As flesh may be,
That these two words might creep and grow
To some degree of spicinesse to thee!

Then should the Pomander, which was before
A speaking sweet, mend by reflection
And tell me more;
For pardon of my imperfection
Would warm and work it sweeter then before.

For when *My Master*, which alone is sweet
And ev'n in my unworthinesse pleasing,
Shall call and meet
My servant, as thee not displeasing,
That call is but the breathing of the sweet.

This breathing would with gains by sweetning me
(As sweet things traffick when they meet)
Return to thee;
And so this new commerce and sweet
Should all my life employ and busie me.

A TRUE HYMNE

My joy, my life, my crown!
My heart was meaning all the day
Somewhat it fain would say;
And still it runneth mutt'ring up and down
With onely this, *My joy, my life, my crown.*

Yet slight not these few words.
If truly said, they may take part
Among the best in art.
The finenesse which a hymne or psalme affords
Is when the soul unto the lines accords.

He who craves all the minde,
And all the soul, and strength, and time,
If the words onely ryme,
Justly complains that somewhat is behinde
To make his verse, or write a hymne in kinde.

Whereas if th' heart be moved,
Although the verse be somewhat scant,
God doth supplie the want.
As when th' heart sayes (sighing to be approved)
O, could I love! and stops: God writeth, *Loved.*

THE POSIE

Let wits contest,
And with their words and posies windows fill.
Lesse then the least
Of all thy mercies, is my posie still.

This on my ring,
This by my picture, in my book I write.
Whether I sing,
Or say, or dictate, this is my delight.

Invention rest,
Comparisons go play, wit use thy will.
Lesse then the least
Of all God's mercies, is my posie still.

THE QUIP

The merrie world did on a day
With his train-bands and mates agree
To meet together where I lay,
And all in sport to geere at me.

First, Beautie crept into a rose;
Which when I pluckt not, Sir, said she,
Tell me, I pray, whose hands are those?
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then Money came, and chinking still,
What tune is this, poore man? said he,
I heard in Musick you had skill.
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came brave Glorie puffing by
In silks that whistled, who but he?
He scarce allow'd me half an eie.
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came quick Wit and Conversation,
And he would needs a comfort be,
And, to be short, make an oration.
But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Yet when the houre of thy designe
To answer these fine things shall come,
Speak not at large, say, I am thine;
And then they have their answer home.

CLASPING OF HANDS

Lord, thou art mine, and I am thine,
If mine I am; and thine much more
Then I or ought or can be mine.
Yet to be thine doth me restore;
So that again I now am mine,
And with advantage mine the more.
Since this being mine brings with it thine,
And thou with me dost thee restore.
If I without thee would be mine,
I neither should be mine nor thine.

Lord, I am thine, and thou art mine;
So mine thou art that something more
I may presume thee mine then thine.
For thou didst suffer to restore
Not thee, but me, and to be mine,
And with advantage mine the more.
Since thou in death wast none of thine,
Yet then as mine didst me restore.
O be mine still! Still make me thine!
Or rather make no Thine and Mine!

PARADISE

I BLESSE thee, Lord, because I GROW
Among thy trees, which in a ROW
To thee both fruit and order OW.

What open force or hidden CHARM
Can blast my fruit, or bring me HARM,
While the inclosure is thine ARM?

Inclose me still for fear I START.
Be to me rather sharp and TART
Then let me want thy hand and ART.

When thou dost greater judgements SPARE,
And with thy knife but prune and PARE,
Ev'n fruitfull trees more fruitfull ARE.

Such sharpnes shows the sweetest FREND,
Such cuttings rather heal then REND,
And such beginnings touch their END.

GRATEFULNESSE

Thou that hast giv'n so much to me,
  Give one thing more, a gratefull heart.
See how thy beggar works on thee
  By art.

He makes thy gifts occasion more,
  And sayes, If he in this be crost,
All thou hast giv'n him heretofore
  Is lost.

But thou didst reckon, when at first
  Thy word our hearts and hands did crave,
What it would come to at the worst
  To save:

Perpetuall knockings at thy doore,
  Tears sullying thy transparent rooms,
Gift upon gift, much would have more,
  And comes.

This notwithstanding, thou wentst on
  And didst allow us all our noise.
Nay, thou hast made a sigh and grone
    Thy joyes.

Not that thou hast not still above
  Much better tunes then grones can make,
But that these countrey-aires thy love
    Did take.

Wherefore I crie and crie again,
  And in no quiet canst thou be
Till I a thankfull heart obtain
    Of thee.

Not thankfull when it pleaseth me,
  As if thy blessings had spare dayes,
But such a heart whose pulse may be
    Thy praise.

PRAISE

Lord, I will mean and speak thy praise,
Thy praise alone.
My busie heart shall spin it all my dayes;
And when it stops for want of store,
Then will I wring it with a sigh or grone,
That thou mayst yet have more.

When thou dost favour any action,
It runnes, it flies;
All things concurre to give it a perfection.
That which had but two legs before,
When thou dost blesse, hath twelve. One wheel doth rise
To twentie then, or more.

But when thou dost on businesse blow,
It hangs, it clogs;
Not all the teams of Albion in a row
Can hale or draw it out of doore.
Legs are but stumps, and Pharaoh's wheels but logs,
And struggling hinders more.

Thousands of things do thee employ
In ruling all
This spacious globe: Angels must have their joy,
Devils their rod, the sea his shore,
The windes their stint. And yet when I did call,
Thou heardst my call, and more.

I have not lost one single tear.
But when mine eyes
Did weep to heav'n, they found a bottle there
(As we have boxes for the poore)
Readie to take them in; yet of a size
That would contain much more.

But after thou hadst slipt a drop
From thy right eye,
(Which there did hang like streamers neare the top
Of some fair church, to show the sore
And bloudie battell which thou once didst trie)
The glasse was full and more.

Wherefore I sing. Yet since my heart,
Though press'd, runnes thin,
O that I might some other hearts convert,
And so take up at use good store;
That to thy chests there might be coming in
Both all my praise and more!

THE INVITATION

Come ye hither all whose taste
Is your waste.
Save your cost and mend your fare.
God is here prepar'd and drest,
And the feast,
God, in whom all dainties are.

Come ye hither all whom wine
Doth define,
Naming you not to your good.
Weep what ye have drunk amisse,
And drink this,
Which before ye drink is bloud.

Come ye hither all whom pain
Doth arraigne,
Bringing all your sinnes to sight.
Taste and fear not. God is here
In this cheer,
And on sinne doth cast the fright.

Come ye hither all whom joy
Doth destroy,
While ye graze without your bounds.
Here is joy that drowneth quite
Your delight,
As a floud the lower grounds.

Come ye hither all whose love
Is your dove,
And exalts you to the skie.
Here is love which, having breath
Ev'n in death,
After death can never die.

Lord I have invited all,
And I shall
Still invite, still call to thee.
For it seems but just and right
In my sight,
Where is all, there all should be.

THE BANQUET

Welcome sweet and sacred cheer,
Welcome deare!
With me, in me, live and dwell;
For thy neatnesse passeth sight,
Thy delight
Passeth tongue to taste or tell.

O what sweetnesse from the bowl
Fills my soul,
Such as is and makes divine!
Is some starre (fled from the sphere)
Melted there,
As we sugar melt in wine?

Or hath sweetnesse in the bread
Made a head
To subdue the smell of sinne;
Flowers, and gummes, and powders giving
All their living,
Lest the enemie should winne?

Doubtlesse neither starre nor flower
Hath the power
Such a sweetnesse to impart.
Onely God, who gives perfumes,
Flesh assumes,
And with it perfumes my heart.

But as Pomanders and wood
Still are good,
Yet being bruis'd are better sented,
God to show how farre his love
Could improve,
Here, as broken, is presented.

When I had forgot my birth,
And on earth
In delights of earth was drown'd,
God took bloud and needs would be
Spilt with me,
And so found me on the ground.

Having rais'd me to look up,
In a cup
Sweetly he doth meet my taste.
But I still being low and short,
Farre from court,
Wine becomes a wing at last.

For with it alone I flie
To the skie;
Where I wipe mine eyes, and see
What I seek, for what I sue,
Him I view
Who hath done so much for me.

Let the wonder of this pitie
Be my dittie,
And take up my lines and life.
Hearken, under pain of death,
Hands and breath,
Strive in this and love the strife.

EVEN-SONG

Blest be the God of love,
Who gave me eyes, and light, and power this day
Both to be busie and to play.
But much more blest be God above

Who gave me sight alone,
Which to himself he did denie;
For when he sees my waies, I dy;
But I have got his sonne, and he hath none.

What have I brought thee home
For this thy love? Have I discharg'd the debt
Which this dayes favour did beget?
I ranne, but all I brought was fome.

Thy diet, care, and cost
Do end in bubbles, balls of winde;
Of winde to thee whom I have crost,
But balls of wilde-fire to my troubled minde.

Yet still thou goest on,
And now with darknesse closest wearie eyes,
Saying to man, *It doth suffice.*
Henceforth repose. Your work is done.

Thus in thy Ebony box
Thou dost inclose us, till the day
Put our amendment in our way,
And give new wheels to our disorder'd clocks.

I muse which shows more love,
The day or night: that is the gale, this th' harbour;
That is the walk, and this the arbour;
Or that the garden, this the grove.

My God, thou art all love.
Not one poore minute 'scapes thy breast
But brings a favour from above.
And in this love, more then in bed, I rest.

ANTIPHON

Cho. Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King.

Vers. The heav'ns are not too high,
His praise may thither flie.
The earth is not too low,
His praises there may grow.

Cho. Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King.

Vers. The church with psalms must shout.
No doore can keep them out.
But above all, the heart
Must bear the longest part.

Cho. Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing,
My God and King.

VIII

BEMERTON STUDY

PREFACE

MANY persons find the reflective poetry of Herbert the most agreeable portion of THE TEMPLE. The more personal poems call for larger historical and artistic imagination than most of us care to supply. To reconstruct their reality we must project ourselves into conditions of mind which belong to a bygone age; and few are willing, or even able, to detach themselves from their own time and feel the humanity in types of emotion which look fictitious because unfamiliar. Or if we take the very probable view that in these poems, as in Shakespeare's or Sidney's Sonnets, art is as much concerned as emotion, the chance that Herbert's eager songs will be understood becomes more slender still. For art is little known or honored among us. It interests but few to see a feeling taking its rise in some experience of a poet, then purged of whatever checks its coherence, and gradually furnished with all that can lend it fulness and precision, until it finally comes forth palpitating with fresh and irresponsible life, and exhibits with a completeness not otherwise possible an isolated section of the complex soul of man. Indeed, busy and matter-of-fact folk are disposed to suspect falsehood in anything which bears the

marks of art, and to count only those emotions genuine which are poured out with the spontaneous disorderliness of nature. Where such instinctive presuppositions exist, the subtle adjustments and intricate accords by means of which Herbert idealizes passions which to-day are but slightly felt will to a considerable extent remove his personal poems from sympathy. Work which charms the lover of exquisite art, and beautiful records of earlier habits of mind which fascinate the imaginative student of spiritual history, will be easily discarded as artificial and full of conceits.

But even then the reflective poetry of Herbert remains. Art is not usually felt to be a disturber of meditation, but rather to be required in utterances of profound thought. Herbert's intellectual verse has accordingly been prized by many who have regarded his emotional with something like contempt. I do not myself think the two kinds can be fully parted. Herbert puts passion into everything, and everything he rationalizes. Yet I have thought I might render him more accessible to all tastes if here among the Bemerton poems, as previously among those of the Cambridge years, I place in a special Group those which are least marked by the personal note. Here stand the compact pieces of wisdom which were shaped in the Wiltshire study. Some of them may have been brought over half-finished from Cambridge, Dauntsey, or Baynton. But in Bemerton they received their

final form, and they appear only in the manuscript of Herbert's later years.

In this more abstract and contemplative species of verse Herbert is able to exhibit with fullest advantage one of his chief literary merits, I mean his power to charge a few common words with more meaning than they easily carry. The phrase strains; the thought obtrudes beyond the words. By audacity of diction Herbert forces his reader — his energetic reader — to approach at some strange angle new aspects of old truths. We all know the aphoristic force of the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets. They were no mere epigrammatists, like the Queen Anne's men. They cared nothing for propriety, and kept their thoughts on things rather than on words. But nobody has ever been able to fashion a phrase with greater certainty that it will stick in the mind which it once enters. In this penetrative power Herbert stands among the foremost of his age. Few poets are more quotable. He abounds in those "jewels five words long which on the stretched forefinger of all time sparkle forever." Yet his sententious power is not satisfied with creating scattered phrases; these are but the material out of which a pathetic, gay, or sagacious whole is firmly fashioned. The general intellectual tone appropriate to each poem is to Herbert's mind a matter of much consequence, and the phrasing which would enter fitly into one is not allowed to disturb the poise of another.

Let any reader compare PEACE and DOTAGE, CONSTANCIE and THE BAG, or either of these with VANITIE or VERTUE, and he will see how harmoniously selective is Herbert's craftsmanship, how free he is from anything like a single fixed style. All this is less felt because without special training on the reader's part Herbert is difficult to follow. He moves at great speed through strange and tangled regions. He loves "by indirection to find direction out." He does not concern himself with his reader, but with getting his own mind completely delivered.

I have set at the head of this Group Herbert's profoundest philosophic study, PROVIDENCE. The first impression it will give is that it is queer. Certain lines will seem positively comic. I do not think this fact would have disturbed Herbert, or have brought him to admit the need of change, any more than similar facts in the poetry of Wordsworth, Browning, and Emerson ever worried those explorers of the human soul. Such poets write for themselves, and merely allow other men to listen while they think. PROVIDENCE is a masterly survey of a closely ordered universe which culminates in man. While lacking modern scientific equipment, trusting too to Aristotelic methods more than would to-day be generally approved, and consequently often mistaking small things for great, Herbert shows a keenness of observation, an ability to group together similar but outwardly

unlike facts, and a prevision even of modern evolutional points of view, which prove him to have been a man of real grasp in subjects lying outside his special religious themes. The wording is strong throughout, in parts rising to an easy majesty not reached by him elsewhere.

After PROVIDENCE I place discussions of several features of the Church and its partially detached members, which lead to consideration of the differences between the Biblical Church and our own. CONSTANCIE and THE FOIL show how unshakable a man may become through righteousness; and then his complex and vacillating nature is shown in MAN'S MEDLEY, GIDDINESSE, VANITIE, DOTAGE, BUSINESSE, SINNES ROUND, and THE WATER-COURSE. The pessimistic view of man's condition is a favorite with Herbert both on religious and poetic grounds. It shows the need of Atonement, and lends itself to decidedly picturesque treatment. THE PULLEY and MARIE MAGDALENE point out our way of delivery from restlessness. The Passion of our Lord is set forth in several poems which from style I should suppose to be written early, but which are not included in the Williams Manuscript. At the end of the Group I have placed half-a-dozen trifles in which the fancy of Herbert plays sweetly with its own ingenuities.

AN INSCRIPTION

TO MY SUCCESSOR

If thou chance for to find
A new House to thy mind,
And built without thy Cost,
Be good to the Poor,
As God gives thee store,
And then my Labour's not lost.

PROVIDENCE

O SACRED Providence, who from end to end
  Strongly and sweetly movest! Shall I write,
And not of thee through whom my fingers bend
  To hold my quill? Shall they not do thee right?

Of all the creatures both in sea and land
  Onely to Man thou hast made known thy wayes,
And put the penne alone into his hand,
  And made him Secretarie of thy praise.

Beasts fain would sing; birds dittie to their notes;
  Trees would be tuning on their native lute
To thy renown; but all their hands and throats
  Are brought to Man, while they are lame and mute.

Man is the world's high Priest. He doth present
  The sacrifice for all; while they below
Unto the service mutter an assent,
  Such as springs use that fall and windes that blow.

He that to praise and laud thee doth refrain
Doth not refrain unto himself alone,
But robs a thousand who would praise thee fain,
And doth commit a world of sinne in one.

The beasts say, Eat me; but if beasts must teach,
The tongue is yours to eat, but mine to praise.
The trees say, Pull me; but the hand you stretch
Is mine to write, as it is yours to raise.

Wherefore, most sacred Spirit, I here present
For me and all my fellows praise to thee.
And just it is that I should pay the rent,
Because the benefit accrues to me.

We all acknowledge both thy power and love
To be exact, transcendent, and divine;
Who dost so strongly and so sweetly move,
While all things have their will, yet none but thine.

For either thy *command* or thy *permission*
Lay hands on all. They are thy *right* and *left*.
The first puts on with speed and expedition,
The other curbs sinne's stealing pace and theft.

Nothing escapes them both. All must appeare,
And be dispos'd, and dress'd, and tun'd by thee,
Who sweetly temper'st all. If we could heare
Thy skill and art, what musick would it be!

Thou art in small things great, not small in any,
Thy even praise can neither rise nor fall.
Thou art in all things one, in each thing many,
For thou art infinite in one and all.

Tempests are calm to thee. They know thy hand,
And hold it fast, as children do their father's,
Which crie and follow. Thou hast made poore sand
Check the proud sea, ev'n when it swells and gathers.

Thy cupboard serves the world. The meat is set
Where all may reach. No beast but knows his feed.
Birds teach us hawking; fishes have their net;
The great prey on the lesse, they on some weed.

Nothing ingendred doth prevent his meat:
Flies have their table spread ere they appeare;
Some creatures have in winter what to eat,
Others do sleep, and envie not their cheer.

How finely dost thou times and seasons spin,
And make a twist checker'd with night and day!
Which as it lengthens windes, and windes us in,
As bouls go on, but turning all the way.

Each creature hath a wisdome for his good.
The pigeons feed their tender off-spring, crying,
When they are callow; but withdraw their food
When they are fledge, that need may teach them flying.

Bees work for man; and yet they never bruise
Their master's flower, but leave it, having done,
As fair as ever and as fit to use;
So both the flower doth stay, and hony run.

Sheep eat the grasse and dung the ground for more.
Trees, after bearing, drop their leaves for soil,
Springs vent their streams, and by expense get store.
Clouds cool by heat, and baths by cooling boil.

Who hath the vertue to expresse the rare
And curious vertues both of herbs and stones?
Is there an herb for that? O that thy care
Would show a root that gives expressions!

And if an herb hath power, what have the starres?
A rose, besides his beautie, is a cure.
Doubtlesse our plagues and plentie, peace and warres
Are there much surer then our art is sure.

Thou hast hid metals. Man may take them thence,
But at his perill. When he digs the place,
He makes a grave; as if the thing had sense,
And threatned man that he should fill the space.

Ev'n poysons praise thee. Should a thing be lost?
Should creatures want for want of heed their due?
Since where are poysons, antidots are most;
The help stands close and keeps the fear in view.

The sea, which seems to stop the traveller,
Is by a ship the speedier passage made.
The windes, who think they rule the mariner,
Are rul'd by him and taught to serve his trade.

And as thy house is full, so I adore
Thy curious art in marshalling thy goods.
The hills with health abound; the vales with store;
The South with marble; North with furres and woods.

Hard things are glorious; easie things good cheap.
The common all men have; that which is rare
Men therefore seek to have and care to keep.
The healthy frosts with summer-fruits compare.

Light without winde is glasse; warm without weight
Is wooll and furres; cool without closenesse, shade;
Speed without pains, a horse; tall without height,
A servile hawk; low without losse, a spade.

All countreys have enough to serve their need.
If they seek fine things, thou dost make them run
For their offence; and then dost turn their speed
To be commerce and trade from sunne to sunne.

Nothing wears clothes but Man; nothing doth need
But he to wear them. Nothing useth fire
But Man alone, to show his heav'nly breed.
And onely he hath fuell in desire.

When th' earth was dry, thou mad'st a sea of wet.
When that lay gather'd, thou didst broach the mountains.
When yet some places could no moisture get,
The windes grew gard'ners, and the clouds good fountains.

Rain, do not hurt my flowers, but gently spend
Your hony drops! Presse not to smell them here.
When they are ripe, their odour will ascend
And at your lodging with their thanks appeare.

How harsh are thorns to pears! And yet they make
A better hedge, and need less reparation.
How smooth are silks compared with a stake,
Or with a stone! Yet make no good foundation.

Sometimes thou dost divide thy gifts to man,
Sometimes unite. The Indian nut alone
Is clothing, meat and trencher, drink and kan,
Boat, cable, sail and needle, all in one.

Most herbs that grow in brooks are hot and dry.
Cold fruits' warm kernells help against the winde.
The lemmon's juice and rinde cure mutually.
The whey of milk doth loose, the milk doth binde.

Thy creatures leap not, but expresse a feast
Where all the guests sit close, and nothing wants.
Frogs marry fish and flesh; bats, bird and beast;
Sponges, non-sense and sense; mines, th' earth and plants.

To show thou art not bound, as if thy lot
Were worse then ours, sometimes thou shiftest hands.
Most things move th' under-jaw; the Crocodile not.
Most things sleep lying; th' Elephant leans or stands.

But who hath praise enough? Nay who hath any?
None can expresse thy works but he that knows them.
And none can know thy works, which are so many
And so complete, but onely he that owes them.

All things that are, though they have sev'rall wayes,
Yet in their being joyn with one advise
To honour thee. And so I give thee praise
In all my other hymnes, but in this twice.

[Each thing that is, although in use and name
It go for one, hath many wayes in store
To honour thee. And so each hymne thy fame
Extolleth many wayes, yet this one more.]

DIVINITIE

As men, for fear the starres should sleep and nod
And trip at night, have spheres suppli'd,
As if a starre were duller then a clod,
Which knows his way without a guide;

Just so the other heav'n they also serve,
Divinitie's transcendent skie,
Which with the edge of wit they cut and carve.
Reason triumphs, and faith lies by.

Could not that wisdome which first broacht the wine
Have thicken'd it with definitions?
And jagg'd his seamlesse coat, had that been fine,
With curious questions and divisions?

But all the doctrine which he taught and gave
Was cleare as heav'n, from whence it came.
At least those beams of truth which onely save
Surpasse in brightnesse any flame.

Love God and love your neighbour. Watch and pray.
Do as ye would be done unto.
O dark instructions! Ev'n as dark as day!
Who can these Gordian knots undo?

But he doth bid us take his bloud for wine.
Bid what he please! Yet I am sure
To take and taste what he doth there designe
Is all that saves, and not obscure.

Then burn thy Epicycles, foolish man.
Break all thy spheres and save thy head.
Faith needs no staffe of flesh, but stoutly can
To heav'n alone both go and leade.

THE BRITISH CHURCH

I joy, deare Mother, when I view
Thy perfect lineaments, and hue
Both sweet and bright.
Beautie in thee takes up her place,
And dates her letters from thy face
When she doth write.

A fine aspect in fit array,
Neither too mean, nor yet too gay,
Shows who is best.
Outlandish looks may not compare,
For all they either painted are,
Or else undrest.

She on the hills which wantonly
Allureth all, in hope to be
By her preferr'd,
Hath kiss'd so long her painted shrines
That ev'n her face by kissing shines,
For her reward.

She in the valley is so shie
Of dressing that her hair doth lie
About her eares;
While she avoids her neighbour's pride,
She wholly goes on th' other side,
And nothing wears.

But dearest Mother, (what those misse,)
The mean, thy praise and glorie is
And long may be.
Blessed be God, whose love it was
To double-moat thee with his grace,
And none but thee.

CHURCH-RENTS AND SCHISMES

Brave rose, (alas!) where art thou? In the chair
Where thou didst lately so triumph and shine
A worm doth sit, whose many feet and hair
Are the more foul the more thou wert divine.
This, this hath done it, this did bite the root
And bottome of the leaves; which when the winde
Did once perceive, it blew them under foot,
Where rude unhallow'd steps do crush and grinde
Their beauteous glories. Onely shreds of thee,
And those all bitten, in thy chair I see.

Why doth my Mother blush? Is she the rose
And shows it so? Indeed Christ's precious bloud
Gave you a colour once; which when your foes
Thought to let out, the bleeding did you good,
And made you look much fresher then before.
But when debates and fretting jealousies
Did worm and work within you more and more,
Your colour faded, and calamities
Turned your ruddie into pale and bleak.
Your health and beautie both began to break.

Then did your sev'rall parts unloose and start.
Which when your neighbours saw, like a north-winde
They rushed in and cast them in the dirt,
Where Pagans tread. O Mother deare and kinde,
Where shall I get me eyes enough to weep,
As many eyes as starres? Since it is night,
And much of Asia and Europe fast asleep,
And ev'n all Africk. Would at least I might
With these two poore ones lick up all the dew
Which falls by night, and poure it out for you!

THE JEWS

Poore nation, whose sweet sap and juice
Our cyens have purloin'd and left you drie;
Whose streams we got by the Apostles' sluce
And use in baptisme, while ye pine and die;
Who, by not keeping once, became a debter,
And now by keeping lose the letter;

Oh that my prayers! mine, alas!
Oh that some Angel might a trumpet sound,
At which the Church falling upon her face
Should crie so loud untill the trump were drown'd,
And by that crie of her deare Lord obtain
That your sweet sap might come again!

SELF-CONDEMNATION

Thou who condemnest Jewish hate
For choosing Barabbas, a murderer,
Before the Lord of glorie,
Look back upon thine own estate,
Call home thine eye (that busie wanderer),
That choice may be thy storie.

He that doth love, and love amisse,
This world's delights before true Christian joy,
Hath made a Jewish choice.
The world an ancient murderer is;
Thousands of souls it hath, and doth destroy
With her enchanting voice.

He that hath made a sorrie wedding
Between his soul and gold, and hath preferr'd
False gain before the true,
Hath done what he condemnes in reading;
For he hath sold for money his deare Lord,
And is a Judas-Jew.

Thus we prevent the last great day,
And judge our selves. That light which sin and passion
Did before dimme and choke,
When once those snuffes are ta'ne away,
Shines bright and cleare, ev'n unto condemnation,
Without excuse or cloke.

AVARICE

Money, thou bane of blisse and sourse of wo,
Whence com'st thou that thou art so fresh and fine?
I know thy parentage is base and low,
Man found thee poore and dirtie in a mine.
Surely thou didst so little contribute
To this great kingdome which thou now hast got
That he was fain, when thou wert destitute,
To digge thee out of thy dark cave and grot.
Then forcing thee by fire, he made thee bright.
Nay, thou hast got the face of man, for we
Have with our stamp and seal transferr'd our right;
Thou art the man, and man but drosse to thee.
Man calleth thee his wealth, who made thee rich,
And while he digs out thee, falls in the ditch.

DECAY

SWEET were the dayes when thou didst lodge with Lot,
Struggle with Jacob, sit with Gideon,
Advise with Abraham, when thy power could not
Encounter Moses' strong complaints and mone.
Thy words were then, *Let me alone.*

One might have sought and found thee presently
At some fair oak, or bush, or cave, or well.
Is my God this way? No, they would reply,
He is to Sinai gone as we heard tell.
List, ye may heare great Aaron's bell.

But now thou dost thy self immure and close
In some one corner of a feeble heart,
Where yet both Sinne and Satan, thy old foes,
Do pinch and straiten thee and use much art
To gain thy thirds and little part.

I see the world grows old, whenas the heat
Of thy great love once spread, as in an urn
Doth closet up itself and still retreat,
Cold sinne still forcing it, till it return,
And calling Justice, all things burn.

JUSTICE

O DREADFULL Justice, what a fright and terrour
Wast thou of old,
When sinne and errour
Did show and shape thy looks to me,
And through their glasse discolour thee!
He that did but look up was proud and bold.

The dishes of thy ballance seem'd to gape,
Like two great pits.
The beam and scape
Did like some tort'ring engine show.
Thy hand above did burn and glow,
Danting the stoutest hearts, the proudest wits.

But now that Christ's pure vail presents the sight,
I see no fears.
Thy hand is white,
Thy scales like buckets, which attend
And interchangeably descend,
Lifting to heaven from this well of tears.

For where before thou still didst call on me,
Now I still touch
And harp on thee.
God's promises have made thee mine.
Why should I justice now decline?
Against me there is none, but for me much.

CONSTANCIE

Who is the honest man?
He that doth still and strongly good pursue,
To God, his neighbour, and himself most true.
Whom neither force nor fawning can
Unpinne or wrench from giving all their due.

Whose honestie is not
So loose or easie that a ruffling winde
Can blow away, or glittering look it blinde.
Who rides his sure and even trot
While the world now rides by, now lags behinde.

Who, when great trials come,
Nor seeks nor shunnes them; but doth calmly stay
Till he the thing and the example weigh.
All being brought into a summe,
What place or person calls for, he doth pay.

Whom none can work or wooe
To use in any thing a trick or sleight,
For above all things he abhorres deceit.
His words and works and fashion too
All of a piece, and all are cleare and straight.

Who never melts or thaws
At close tentations. When the day is done,
His goodnesse sets not, but in dark can runne.
The sunne to others writeth laws,
And is their vertue. Vertue is his Sunne.

Who, when he is to treat
With sick folks, women, those whom passion
sway,
Allows for that and keeps his constant way.
Whom others' faults do not defeat;
But though men fail him, yet his part doth play.

Whom nothing can procure,
When the wide world runnes bias, from his will
To writhe his limbes, and share, not mend the il
This is the Mark-man, safe and sure,
Who still is right, and prayes to be so still.

THE FOIL

If we could see below
The sphere of vertue and each shining grace
As plainly as that above doth show,
This were the better skie, the brighter place.

God hath made starres the foil
To set off vertues, griefs to set off sinning.
Yet in this wretched world we toil
As if grief were not foul, nor vertue winning.

MAN'S MEDLEY

Heark, how the birds do sing,
And woods do ring!
All creatures have their joy, and man hath his.
Yet if we rightly measure,
Man's joy and pleasure
Rather hereafter then in present is.

To this life things of sense
Make their pretence;
In th' other Angels have a right by birth.
Man ties them both alone,
And makes them one,
With th' one hand touching heav'n, with th' other earth.

In soul he mounts and flies,
In flesh he dies.
He wears a stuffe whose thread is coarse and round,
But trimm'd with curious lace,
And should take place
After the trimming, not the stuffe and ground.

Not that he may not here
Taste of the cheer;
But as birds drink and straight lift up their head,
So must he sip and think
Of better drink
He may attain to after he is dead.

But as his joyes are double,
So is his trouble.
He hath two winters, other things but one.
Both frosts and thoughts do nip
And bite his lip,
And he of all things fears two deaths alone.

Yet ev'n the greatest griefs
May be reliefs,
Could he but take them right and in their wayes.
Happie is he whose heart
Hath found the art
To turn his double pains to double praise.

GIDDINESSE

Oh, what a thing is man! How farre from power,
From setled peace and rest!
He is some twentie sev'rall men at least
Each sev'rall houre.

One while he counts of heav'n as of his treasure;
But then a thought creeps in
And calls him coward who for fear of sinne
Will lose a pleasure.

Now he will fight it out and to the warres;
Now eat his bread in peace
And snudge in quiet. Now he scorns increase;
Now all day spares.

He builds a house, which quickly down must go,
As if a whirlwinde blew
And crusht the building; and it's partly true,
His minde is so.

O what a sight were Man if his attires
Did alter with his minde;
And like a Dolphin's skinne, his clothes combin'd
With his desires!

Surely if each one saw another's heart,
There would be no commerce,
No sale or bargain passe. All would disperse,
And live apart.

Lord, mend or rather make us. One creation
Will not suffice our turn.
Except thou make us dayly, we shall spurn
Our own salvation.

VANITIE

The fleet Astronomer can bore
And thred the spheres with his quick-piercing minde.
He views their stations, walks from doore to doore,
Surveys as if he had design'd
To make a purchase there. He sees their dances,
And knoweth long before
Both their full-ey'd aspects and secret glances.

The nimble Diver with his side
Cuts through the working waves, that he may fetch
His dearely-earned pearl, which God did hide
On purpose from the ventrous wretch;
That he might save his life, and also hers
Who with excessive pride
Her own destruction and his danger wears.

The subtil Chymick can devest
And strip the creature naked, till he finde
The callow principles within their nest.
There he imparts to them his minde,
Admitted to their bed-chamber, before
They appeare trim and drest
To ordinarie suitours at the doore.

What hath not man sought out and found,
But his deare God? Who yet his glorious law
Embosomes in us, mellowing the ground
With showres and frosts, with love and
aw,
So that we need not say, Where's this command?
Poore man, thou searchest round
To finde out *death*, but missest *life* at hand.

DOTAGE

False glozing pleasures, casks of happinesse,
Foolish night-fires, women's and children's wishes,
Chases in Arras, guilded emptinesse,
Shadows well mounted, dreams in a career,
Embroider'd lyes, nothing between two dishes;
These are the pleasures here.

True earnest sorrows, rooted miseries,
Anguish in grain, vexations ripe and blown,
Sure-footed griefs, solid calamities,
Plain demonstrations, evident and cleare,
Fetching their proofs ev'n from the very bone;
These are the sorrows here.

But oh the folly of distracted men,
Who griefs in earnest, joyes in jest pursue;
Preferring, like brute beasts, a lothsome den
Before a court, ev'n that above so cleare,
Where are no sorrows, but delights more true
Then miseries are here!

BUSINESSE

CANST be idle? Canst thou play,
Foolish soul, who sinn'd to day?

Rivers run, and springs each one
Know their home, and get them gone.
Hast thou tears, or hast thou none?

If, poore soul, thou hast no tears,
Would thou hadst no faults or fears!
Who hath these, those ill forbears.

Windes still work; it is their plot,
Be the season cold or hot.
Hast thou sighs, or hast thou not?

If thou hast no sighs or grones,
Would thou hadst no flesh and bones!
Lesser pains scape greater ones.

But if yet thou idle be,
Foolish soul, who di'd for thee?

Who did leave his Father's throne
To assume thy flesh and bone?
Had he life, or had he none?

If he had not liv'd for thee,
Thou hadst di'd most wretchedly,
And two deaths had been thy fee.

He so farre thy good did plot
That his own self he forgot.
Did he die, or did he not?

If he had not di'd for thee,
Thou hadst liv'd in miserie.
Two lives worse then ten deaths be.

And hath any space of breath
'Twixt his sinnes and Saviour's death?

He that loseth gold, though drosse,
Tells to all he meets his crosse.
He that sinnes, hath he no losse?

He that findes a silver vein
Thinks on it, and thinks again.
Brings thy Saviour's death no gain?

Who in heart not ever kneels
Neither sinne nor Saviour feels.

SINNES ROUND

Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am
That my offences course it in a ring.
My thoughts are working like a busie flame
Untill their cockatrice they hatch and bring.
And when they once have perfected their draughts,
My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts.

My words take fire from my inflamed thoughts,
Which spit it forth like the Sicilian hill.
They vent the wares and passe them with their faults,
And by their breathing ventilate the ill.
But words suffice not where are lewd intentions;
My hands do joyn to finish the inventions.

My hands do joyn to finish the inventions.
And so my sinnes ascend three stories high,
As Babel grew before there were dissentions.
Yet ill deeds loyter not, for they supplie
New thoughts of sinning. Wherefore, to my shame,
Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am.

THE WATER-COURSE

THOU who dost dwell and linger here below,
Since the condition of this world is frail
Where of all plants afflictions soonest grow,
If troubles overtake thee, do not wail;
For who can look for lesse that loveth { Life. / Strife.

But rather turn the pipe and water's course
To serve thy sinnes, and furnish thee with store
Of sov'raigne tears, springing from true remorse;
That so in purenesse thou mayst him adore
Who gives to man as he sees fit { Salvation. / Damnation.

THE PULLEY

When God at first made man,
Having a glasse of blessings standing by,
Let us (said he) poure on him all we can.
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span.

So strength first made a way,
Then beautie flow'd, then wisdome, honour, pleasure.
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone of all his treasure
Rest in the bottome lay.

For if I should (said he)
Bestow this jewell also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me,
And rest in Nature, not the God of Nature.
So both should losers be.

Yet let him keep the rest,
But keep them with repining restlesnesse.
Let him be rich and wearie, that at least,
If goodnesse leade him not, yet wearinesse
May tosse him to my breast.

MARIE MAGDALENE

When blessed Marie wip'd her Saviour's feet,
(Whose precepts she had trampled on before,)
And wore them for a jewell on her head,
Shewing his steps should be the street
Wherein she thenceforth evermore
With pensive humblenesse would live and tread;

She being stain'd her self, why did she strive
To make him clean who could not be defil'd?
Why kept she not her tears for her own faults,
And not his feet? Though we could dive
In tears like seas, our sinnes are pil'd
Deeper then they, in words, and works, and thoughts.

Deare soul, she knew who did vouchsafe and deigne
To bear her filth, and that her sinnes did dash
Ev'n God himself; wherefore she was not loth,
As she had brought wherewith to stain,
So to bring in wherewith to wash.
And yet, in washing one, she washed both.

THE AGONIE

Philosophers have measur'd mountains,
Fathom'd the depths of seas, of states, and kings,
Walk'd with a staffe to heav'n, and traced fountains;
But there are two vast, spacious things,
The which to measure it doth more behove,
Yet few there are that sound them: Sinne and Love.

Who would know Sinne, let him repair
Unto Mount Olivet; there shall he see
A man so wrung with pains that all his hair,
His skinne, his garments bloudie be.
Sinne is that presse and vice which forceth pain
To hunt his cruell food through ev'ry vein.

Who knows not Love, let him assay
And taste that juice which on the crosse a pike
Did set again abroach; then let him say
If ever he did taste the like.
Love is that liquor sweet and most divine
Which my God feels as bloud; but I, as wine.

SEPULCHRE

O BLESSED bodie! Whither art thou thrown?
No lodging for thee but a cold hard stone?
So many hearts on earth, and yet not one
Receive thee?
Sure there is room within our hearts—good store!
For they can lodge transgressions by the score.
Thousands of toyes dwell there, yet out of doore
They leave thee.

But that which shews them large, shews them unfit.
Whatever sinne did this pure rock commit,
Which holds thee now? Who hath indited it
Of murder?
Where our hard hearts have took up stones to brain thee,
And missing this, most falsly did arraigne thee,
Onely these stones in quiet entertain thee,
And order.

And as of old, the law by heav'nly art
Was writ in stone; so thou, which also art
The letter of the word, find'st no fit heart
To hold thee.
Yet do we still persist as we began,
And so should perish, but that nothing can,
Though it be cold, hard, foul, from loving man
Withold thee.

THE BAG

Away despair! My gracious Lord doth heare.
Though windes and waves assault my keel,
He doth preserve it; he doth steer,
Ev'n when the boat seems most to reel.
Storms are the triumph of his art.
Well may he close his eyes, but not his heart.

Hast thou not heard that my Lord Jesus di'd?
Then let me tell thee a strange storie.
The God of power, as he did ride
In his majestick robes of glorie,
Resolv'd to light; and so one day
He did descend, undressing all the way.

The starres his tire of light and rings obtain'd,
The cloud his bow, the fire his spear,
The sky his azure mantle gain'd.
And when they ask'd what he would wear,
He smil'd and said, as he did go,
He had new clothes a making here below.

When he was come, as travellers are wont,
He did repair unto an inne.
Both then and after, many a brunt
He did endure to cancell sinne.
And having giv'n the rest before,
Here he gave up his life to pay our score.

But as he was returning, there came one
That ran upon him with a spear.
He who came hither all alone,
Bringing nor man, nor arms, nor fear,
Receiv'd the blow upon his side;
And straight he turn'd and to his brethren cry'd,

If ye have anything to send or write,
(I have no bag, but here is room)
Unto my father's hands and sight
(Beleeve me) it shall safely come.
That I shall minde what you impart,
Look, you may put it very neare my heart.

Or if hereafter any of my friends
Will use me in this kinde, the doore
Shall still be open; what he sends
I will present, and somewhat more,
Not to his hurt. Sighs will convey
Any thing to me. Heark despair, away!

THE SONNE

Let forrain nations of their language boast,
What fine varietie each tongue affords,
I like our language, as our men and coast.
Who cannot dresse it well, want wit, not words.
How neatly doe we give one onely name
To parents' issue and the sunne's bright starre!
A sonne is light and fruit; a fruitful flame
Chasing the father's dimnesse, carri'd farre
From the first man in th' East to fresh and new
Western discov'ries of posteritie.
So in one word our Lord's humilitie
We turn upon him in a sense most true:
For what Christ once in humblenesse began,
We him in glorie call, *The Sonne of Man.*

LOVE–JOY

As on a window late I cast mine eye,
I saw a vine drop grapes with *J* and *C*
Anneal'd on every bunch. One standing by
Ask'd what it meant. I (who am never loth
To spend my iudgement) said, It seem'd to me
To be the bodie and the letters both
Of *Joy* and *Charitie*. Sir, you have not miss'd,
The man reply'd: It figures *JESUS CHRIST*.

ANA- { MARY / ARMY } GRAM

How well her name an *Army* doth present
In whom the *Lord of hosts* did pitch his tent!

THE CHURCH-FLOORE

Mark you the floore? That square and speckled stone,
Which looks so firm and strong,
Is *Patience.*

And th' other black and grave, wherewith each one
Is checker'd all along,
Humilitie.

The gentle rising, which on either hand
Leads to the Quire above,
Is *Confidence.*

But the sweet cement, which in one sure band
Ties the whole frame, is *Love*
And *Charitie.*

Hither sometimes Sinne steals, and stains
The marble's neat and curious veins;
But all is cleansed when the marble weeps.
Sometimes Death, puffing at the doore,
Blows all the dust about the floore;
But while he thinks to spoil the room, he sweeps.
Blest be the *Architect* whose art
Could build so strong in a weak heart.

IX

RESTLESSNESS

THERE came a reaction. The little parish which had seemed so attractive in its isolation, and into which Herbert had thrown himself with such joyful eagerness, proved painfully small. For thirty-seven years he had lived in the full tide of affairs. Born in high station, he had found his associates among the leaders of the day. With the gayest, the most learned, the most widely influential men of his time, Herbert had long been living on terms of intimacy, and from them had derived much of that ability to *write fine and wittie* on which to the last he prided himself. Inaction had always been in his eyes the most dreaded of evils. Yet for the rest of his life he was to be cut off from society. He was to minister to a small group of farm laborers in a village remote from city, court, and university. His predecessor had not endured such conditions; but leaving church and parsonage in decay, had lived "at a better Parsonage house sixteen or twenty miles from this place."

At first the restrictions of Herbert's surroundings were not irksome. After the storms of the Crisis period he found peace in sacred tasks and in what he supposed to be a settled mind. It seemed as if

at length he *past changing were, Fast in God's Paradise, where no flower can wither.* According to Walton, he remarked to a friend just after his Induction: *I now look back upon my aspiring thoughts, and think myself more happy than if I had attain'd what then I so ambitiously thirsted for. In God and his service is a fulness of all joy and pleasure, and no satiety.* Voluntarily cut off from outward activities, we have seen him joyfully developing every possibility within his own narrow bounds. He explores his priestly duties; he calls on the services of his Church to disclose their inmost significance; he records with double diligence the moods of his soul. While it is not necessary to suppose that a majority of his poems were produced in these three years, still the early manuscript contains only a minority; and a large proportion of those which first appear in the later manuscript allude to the priestly office. Herbert's art must, therefore, have been busily pursued during this time of seclusion. A kindred art he also had. "His chiefest recreation was Musick, in which heavenly Art he was a most excellent Master, and did himself compose many divine Hymns and Anthems which he set and sung to his Lute or Viol. And though he was a lover of retiredness, yet his love of Musick was such that he went usually twice every week on certain appointed days to the Cathedral Church in Salisbury; and at his return would say that *his time spent in*

Prayer and Cathedral Musick elevated his Soul and was his Heaven upon Earth. But before his return thence to Bemerton, he would usually sing and play his part at an appointed Musick-meeting."

Such were the occupations accessible in his small parish. For one who had always lived at the centre of men and things, the change experienced could not fail to be great. It had its welcome and unwelcome sides, corresponding to the diversities in Herbert's own nature. With one side of himself — the Elizabethan and Renaissance side — he loved gayety, pleasure, great place, intellectual companionship, the stir and glitter of the world. With the other side, which connected him with the early half of the seventeenth century, he loved — profoundly and tenderly loved — an abstract and exclusive God, the guardian of unity, order, obedience, silence, one hostile to every species of earthly attachment. We have seen how on entering the priesthood he anticipated that in this divine love there could be *no satiety.* He did not find it so. The conflicts of the Crisis were renewed. Human interests, personal desires, had never died in Herbert. They never did die. That is what makes him so attractive a figure. He is ever a struggling soul, eager for God and unity, but only less eager to make the wealthy world his own. He is no calm saint. Nobody can read the stormy poems of this Group and find the epithet appropriate which has

been connected with his name by loose admirers in his and our age. Herbert is not holy. There was always a *noise of thoughts within his heart.* However closely *joy was locked up, some bad man would let it out again.* He was continually asking of God whether *it were not better to bestow some place and power* on him; and years spent *in cold dispute of what is fit and not* were apt to appear as *only lost.* Many will feel that this failure of inward unity was due to the separatist notions under which Herbert for the most part thought of God, conceiving Him not as immanent in human affairs, but as detached and hostile. No doubt this is true; but it does not make the conflict in Herbert's soul less real or instructive. Some readers, remembering the literary habits of Herbert's age and the sonnets of its love-poets, may suspect that the extent of the conflict is exaggerated in the interests of dramatic art. But even so he paints a conflict judged appropriate to the situation. However we approach these most human of Herbert's songs, we shall find that in them justice is done to sides of life from which the saint instinctively turns. Man is a *Medley;* and Herbert, never the simple and "holy" person of popular tradition, depicts that medley with sympathetic vividness.

The Group begins with one of the greatest of his autobiographic poems; and ends with another, more allegoric, but even more detailed and confessional in character. In Love Unknown Her-

bert treats imaginatively the three periods of his manhood. Though he knew himself destined for the priesthood, his heart was first centred on Academic and royal honors. A dish of such fruit he gained, intending eventually to offer it to the Lord. (*This dignity hath no such earthiness in it but it may very well be joined with heaven:* Herbert to Sir J. Danvers, 1619.) But his heart needed to be detached from these things and cleansed. Then came the deaths of his friends and mother (*a sacrifice out of his fold*, l. 30), the resignation of his Oratorship, and his severe illness. These afflictions fell upon him when cold toward God,—hard of heart as regards his own appointed work. Becoming supple through affliction and through a taste of God's forgiving love, he turned to that priesthood and home where he had always expected rest. But even in Bemerton he finds dull conditions and goading thoughts. According to this interpretation, the present poem would resurvey at a later date the career already sketched in AFFLICTION, p. 180, which is here referred to in l. 28. A more detailed but similar account is given in THE PILGRIMAGE. In THE FAMILIE, THE DISCHARGE, THE SIZE, and THE METHOD he considers reasons for contentment; in HOPE he perceives how inadequate these are; in SUBMISSION we hear of the painful contrast between the empty life at Bemerton and that to which he had aspired, a contrast resulting in the DULNESSE of the next poem

and the rebellious mood of THE COLLAR. The sense that in the service of God there is little rewarding joy suggests in the next three poems that God has withdrawn his favor, and gives rise to tender lament. CONSCIENCE insists on obedience. But in one of the most pathetic poems of the series, THE CROSSE, we learn how partly through illness, and partly through a restless heart, the priesthood is proving a disappointment.

LOVE UNKNOWN

DEARE Friend, sit down, the tale is long and sad,
And in my faintings I presume your loue
Will more complie then help. A Lord I had,
And have, of whom some grounds which may improve
I hold for two lives, and both lives in me.
To him I brought a dish of fruit one day,
And in the middle plac'd my heart. But he
(I sigh to say)
Lookt on a servant who did know his eye
Better then you know me, or (which is one)
Then I my self. The servant instantly,
Quitting the fruit, seiz'd on my heart alone
And threw it in a font wherein did fall
A stream of bloud which issu'd from the side
Of a great rock. I well remember all
And have good cause. There it was dipt and di'd,
And washt and wrung; the very wringing yet
Enforceth tears. *Your heart was foul, I fear.*
Indeed 't is true. I did and do commit
Many a fault more then my lease will bear,
Yet still askt pardon and was not deni'd.
But you shall heare. After my heart was well,
And clean and fair, as I one even-tide
(I sigh to tell)

Walkt by my self abroad, I saw a large
And spacious fornace flaming, and thereon
A boyling caldron round about whose verge
Was in great letters set *AFFLICTION*.
The greatnesse shew'd the owner. So I went
To fetch a sacrifice out of my fold,
Thinking with that which I did thus present
To warm his love, which I did fear grew cold.
But as my heart did tender it, the man
Who was to take it from me slipt his hand
And threw my heart into the scalding pan —
My heart, that brought it (do you understand?)
The offerer's heart. *Your heart was hard, I fear.*
Indeed 't is true. I found a callous matter
Began to spread and to expatiate there;
But with a richer drug then scalding water
I bath'd it often, ev'n with holy bloud,
Which at a board, while many drunk bare wine,
A friend did steal into my cup for good,
Ev'n taken inwardly, and most divine
To supple hardnesses. But at the length
Out of the caldron getting, soon I fled
Unto my house, where to repair the strength
Which I had lost, I hasted to my bed.
But when I thought to sleep out all these faults
(I sigh to speak)

I found that some had stuff'd the bed with thoughts,
I would say *thorns*. Deare, could my heart not break,
When with my pleasures ev'n my rest was gone?
Full well I understood who had been there,
For I had giv'n the key to none but one.
It must be he. *Your heart was dull, I fear.*
Indeed a slack and sleepie state of minde
Did oft possesse me, so that when I pray'd,
Though my lips went, my heart did stay behinde.
But all my scores were by another paid,
Who took the debt upon him. *Truly, Friend,*
For ought I heare, your Master shows to you
More favour then you wot of. Mark the end:
The Font did onely what was old renew,
The Caldron suppled what was grown too hard,
The Thorns did quicken what was grown too dull,
All did but strive to mend what you had marr'd.
Wherefore be cheer'd, and praise him to the full
Each day, each houre, each moment of the week,
Who fain would have you be new, tender, quick.

THE FAMILIE

What doth this noise of thoughts within my heart
As if they had a part?
What do these loud complaints and pulling fears
As if there were no rule or eares?

But, Lord, the house and familie are thine,
Though some of them repine.
Turn out these wranglers which defile thy seat,
For where thou dwellest all is neat.

First Peace and Silence all disputes controll,
Then Order plaies the soul;
And giving all things their set forms and houres,
Makes of wilde woods sweet walks and bowres.

Humble Obedience neare the doore doth stand,
Expecting a command;
Then whom in waiting nothing seems more slow,
Nothing more quick when she doth go.

Joyes oft are there, and griefs as oft as joyes,
But griefs without a noise;
Yet speak they louder then distemper'd fears.
What is so shrill as silent tears?

This is thy house, with these it doth abound.
And where these are not found,
Perhaps thou com'st sometimes and for a day,
But not to make a constant stay.

THE DISCHARGE

Busie enquiring heart, what wouldst thou know?
Why dost thou prie,
And turn, and leer, and with a licorous eye
Look high and low,
And in thy lookings stretch and grow?

Hast thou not made thy counts and summ'd up all?
Did not thy heart
Give up the whole and with the whole depart?
Let what will fall,
That which is past who can recall?

Thy life is God's, thy time to come is gone,
And is his right.
He is thy night at noon, he is at night
Thy noon alone.
The crop is his, for he hath sown.

And well it was for thee, when this befell,
That God did make
Thy businesse his, and in thy life partake;
For thou canst tell,
If it be his once, all is well.

Onely the present is thy part and fee.
And happy thou
If, though thou didst not beat thy future brow,
Thou couldst well see
What present things requir'd of thee.

They ask enough. Why shouldst thou further go?
Raise not the mudde
Of future depths, but drink the cleare and good.
Dig not for wo
In times to come, for it will grow.

Man and the present fit; if he provide,
He breaks the square.
This houre is mine; if for the next I care,
I grow too wide,
And do encroach upon death's side.

For death each houre environs and surrounds.
He that would know
And care for future chances, cannot go
Unto those grounds
But through a Church-yard which them
bounds.

Things present shrink and die. But they that spend
Their thoughts and sense
On future grief, do not remove it thence,
But it extend,
And draw the bottome out an end.

God chains the dog till night. Wilt loose the chain,
And wake thy sorrow?
Wilt thou forestall it, and now grieve tomorrow,
And then again
Grieve over freshly all thy pain?

Either grief will not come, or if it must,
Do not forecast.
And while it cometh it is almost past.
Away distrust!
My God hath promis'd, he is just.

THE SIZE

Content thee, greedie heart.
Modest and moderate joyes to those that have
Title to more hereafter when they part,
Are passing brave.
Let th' upper springs into the low
Descend and fall, and thou dost flow.

What though some have a fraught
Of cloves and nutmegs, and in cinamon sail;
If thou hast wherewithall to spice a draught,
When griefs prevail,
And for the future time art heir
To th' Isle of spices, is't not fair?

To be in both worlds full
Is more then God was, who was hungrie here.
Wouldst thou his laws of fasting disanull?
Enact good cheer?
Lay out thy joy, yet hope to save it?
Wouldst thou both eat thy cake and have it?

Great joyes are all at once,
But little do reserve themselves for more.
Those have their hopes; these what they have renounce,
And live on score.
Those are at home, these journey still
And meet the rest on Sion's hill.

Thy Saviour sentenc'd joy,
And in the flesh condemn'd it as unfit,
At least in lump, for such doth oft destroy;
Whereas a bit
Doth tice us on to hopes of more,
And for the present health restore.

A Christian's state and case
Is not a corpulent, but a thinne and spare
Yet active strength; whose long and bonie face
Content and care
Do seem to equally divide —
Like a pretender, not a bride.

Wherefore sit down, good heart.
Grasp not at much, for fear thou losest all.
If comforts fell according to desert,
They would great frosts and snows destroy;
For we should count, Since the last joy.

Then close again the seam
Which thou hast open'd. Do not spread thy robe
In hope of great things. Call to minde thy dream,
An earthly globe,
On whose meridian was engraven,
These seas are tears, and heav'n the haven.

THE METHOD

Poore heart, lament.
For since thy God refuseth still,
There is some rub, some discontent,
Which cools his will.

Thy Father *could*
Quickly effect what thou dost move,
For he is *Power;* and sure he *would,*
For he is *Love.*

Go search this thing,
Tumble thy breast and turn thy book.
If thou hadst lost a glove or ring,
Wouldst thou not look?

What do I see
Written above there? *Yesterday*
I did behave me carelesly
When I did pray.

And should God's eare
To such indifferents chained be
Who do not their own motions heare?
Is God lesse free?

But stay! What's there?
Late when I would have something done,
I had a motion to forbear,
Yet I went on.

And should God's eare,
Which needs not man, be ty'd to those
Who heare not him, but quickly heare
His utter foes?

Then once more pray.
Down with thy knees, up with thy voice.
Seek pardon first, and God will say,
Glad heart rejoyce.

HOPE

I GAVE to Hope a watch of mine; but he
An anchor gave to me.
Then an old prayer-book I did present;
And he an optick sent.
With that I gave a viall full of tears;
But he a few green eares.
Ah Loyterer! I'le no more, no more I'le bring.
I did expect a ring.

SUBMISSION

But that Thou art my wisdome, Lord,
And both mine eyes are thine,
My minde would be extreamly stirr'd
For missing my designe.

Were it not better to bestow
Some place and power on me?
Then should thy praises with me grow,
And share in my degree.

But when I thus dispute and grieve,
I do resume my sight,
And pilfring what I once did give,
Disseize thee of thy right.

How know I, if thou shouldst me raise,
That I should then raise thee?
Perhaps great places and thy praise
Do not so well agree.

Wherefore unto my gift I stand;
I will no more advise.
Onely do thou lend me a hand,
Since thou hast both mine eyes.

DULNESSE

Why do I languish thus, drooping and dull,
As if I were all earth?
O give me quicknesse, that I may with mirth
Praise thee brim-full!

The wanton lover in a curious strain
Can praise his fairest fair,
And with quaint metaphors her curled hair
Curl o're again.

Thou art my lovelinesse, my life, my light,
Beautie alone to me.
Thy bloudy death and undeserv'd makes thee
Pure red and white.

When all perfections as but one appeare —
That, those thy form doth show —
The very dust where thou dost tread and go
Makes beauties here.

Where are my lines then? My approaches? Views?
Where are my window-songs?
Lovers are still pretending, and ev'n wrongs
Sharpen their Muse.

But I am lost in flesh, whose sugred lyes
Still mock me and grow bold.
Sure thou didst put a minde there, if I could
Finde where it lies.

Lord, cleare thy gift, that with a constant wit
I may but look towards thee.
Look onely; for to *love* thee, who can be,
What angel fit?

THE COLLAR

I STRUCK the board, and cry'd, No more!
I will abroad.
What? Shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free, free as the rode,
Loose as the winde, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me bloud, and not restore
What I have lost with cordiall fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did drie it. There was corn
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the yeare onely lost to me?
Have I no bayes to crown it?
No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?
All wasted?

Not so, my heart! But there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures. Leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit and not. Forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,
Which pettie thoughts have made, and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law,
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away! Take heed!
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's head there. Tie up thy fears.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load.
But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde
At every word,
Me thoughts I heard one calling, *Childe!*
And I reply'd, *My Lord.*

THE BUNCH OF GRAPES

Joy, I did lock thee up, but some bad man
Hath let thee out again;
And now, me thinks, I am where I began
Sev'n yeares ago. One vogue and vein,
One aire of thoughts usurps my brain.
I did toward Canaan draw, but now I am
Brought back to the Red sea, the sea of shame.

For as the Jews of old by God's command
Travell'd and saw no town,
So now each Christian hath his journeys spann'd
Their storie pennes and sets us down.
A single deed is small renown.
God's works are wide, and let in future times.
His ancient justice overflows our crimes.

Then have we too our guardian fires and clouds.
Our Scripture-dew drops fast.
We have our sands and serpents, tents and shrowds.
Alas! Our murmurings come not last.
But where's the cluster? Where's the taste
Of mine inheritance? Lord, if I must borrow,
Let me as well take up their joy as sorrow.

But can he want the grape who hath the wine?
I have their fruit and more.
Blessed be God, who prosper'd *Noah's* vine
And made it bring forth grapes good store.
But much more him I must adore
Who of the law's sowre juice sweet wine did make,
Ev'n God himself being pressed for my sake.

THE SEARCH

Whither, O, whither art thou fled,
My Lord, my Love?
My searches are my daily bread,
Yet never prove.

My knees pierce th' earth, mine eies the skie,
And yet the sphere
And centre both to me denie
That thou art there.

Yet can I mark how herbs below
Grow green and gay,
As if to meet thee they did know,
While I decay.

Yet can I mark how starres above
Simper and shine,
As having keyes unto thy love,
While poore I pine.

I sent a sigh to seek thee out,
Deep drawn in pain,
Wing'd like an arrow; but my scout
Returns in vain.

I tun'd another (having store)
Into a grone,
Because the search was dumbe before;
But all was one.

Lord, dost thou some new fabrick mold,
Which favour winnes
And keeps thee present, leaving th' old
Unto their sinnes?

Where is my God? What hidden place
Conceals thee still?
What covert dare eclipse thy face?
Is it thy will?

O let not that of any thing!
Let rather brasse,
Or steel, or mountains be thy ring,
And I will passe.

Thy will such an intrenching is
As passeth thought.
To it all strength, all subtilties
Are things of nought.

Thy will such a strange distance is
As that to it
East and West touch, the poles do kisse,
And parallels meet.

Since then my grief must be as large
As is thy space,
Thy distance, from me; see my charge,
Lord, see my case.

O take these barres, these lengths away!
Turn, and restore me.
Be not Almightie, let me say,
Against, but for me.

When thou dost turn and wilt be neare,
What edge so keen,
What poiṅt so piercing, can appeare
To come between?

For as thy absence doth excell
All distance known,
So doth thy nearenesse bear the bell,
Making two one.

ASSURANCE

O SPITEFULL bitter thought!
Bitterly spitefull thought! Couldst thou invent
So high a torture? Is such poyson bought?
Doubtlesse but in the way of punishment,
When wit contrives to meet with thee,
No such rank poyson can there be.

Thou said'st but even now
That all was not so fair as I conceiv'd
Betwixt my God and me: that I allow
And coin large hopes, but that I was deceiv'd;
Either the league was broke or neare it,
And that I had great cause to fear it.

And what to this? What more
Could poyson, if it had a tongue, expresse?
What is thy aim? Wouldst thou unlock the doore
To cold despairs and gnawing pensivenesse?
Wouldst thou raise devils? I see, I know,
I writ thy purpose long ago.

But I will to my Father,
Who heard thee say it. O most gracious Lord,
If all the hope and comfort that I gather
Were from my self, I had not half a word,
Not half a letter to oppose
What is objected by my foes.

But thou art my desert,
And in this league, which now my foes invade,
Thou art not onely to perform thy part,
But also mine; as when the league was made
Thou didst at once thy self indite,
And hold my hand while I did write.

Wherefore if thou canst fail,
Then can thy truth and I. But while rocks stand,
And rivers stirre, thou canst not shrink or quail.
Yea, when both rocks and all things shall disband,
Then shalt thou be my rock and tower,
And make their ruine praise thy power.

Now foolish thought go on,
Spin out thy thread and make thereof a coat
To hide thy shame; for thou hast cast a bone
Which bounds on thee, and will not down thy throat.
What for it self love once began,
Now love and truth will end in man.

CONSCIENCE

Peace pratler, do not lowre!
Not a fair look but thou dost call it foul.
Not a sweet dish but thou dost call it sowre.
Musick to thee doth howl.
By listning to thy chatting fears
I have both lost mine eyes and eares.

Pratler, no more, I say!
My thoughts must work, but like a noiselesse sphere;
Harmonious peace must rock them all the day.
No room for pratlers there.
If thou persistest, I will tell thee
That I have physick to expell thee.

And the receit shall be
My Saviour's bloud. Whenever at his board
I do but taste it, straight it cleanseth me
And leaves thee not a word;
No, not a tooth or nail to scratch,
And at my actions carp or catch.

Yet if thou talkest still,
Besides my physick know there's some for thee;
Some wood and nails to make a staffe or bill
For those that trouble me.
The bloudie crosse of my deare Lord
Is both my physick and my sword.

THE CROSSE

What is this strange and uncouth thing?
To make me sigh, and seek, and faint, and die,
Untill I had some place where I might sing,
And serve thee; and not onely I,
But all my wealth and familie might combine
To set thy honour up as our designe.

And then when after much delay,
Much wrastling, many a combate, this deare end,
So much desir'd, is giv'n, to take away
My power to serve thee! To unbend
All my abilities, my designes confound,
And lay my threatnings bleeding on the ground!

One ague dwelleth in my bones,
Another in my soul (the memorie
What I would do for thee if once my grones
Could be allow'd for harmonie).
I am in all a weak disabled thing,
Save in the sight thereof where strength doth sting.

Besides, things sort not to my will
  Ev'n when my will doth studie thy renown.
Thou turnest th' edge of all things on me still,
    Taking me up to throw me down.
So that ev'n when my hopes seem to be sped
I am to grief alive, to them as dead.

To have my aim, and yet to be
  Farther from it then when I bent my bow;
To make my hopes my torture and the fee
    Of all my woes another wo,
Is in the midst of delicates to need,
And ev'n in Paradise to be a weed.

Ah my deare Father, ease my smart!
  These contrarieties crush me. These crosse
    actions
Doe winde a rope about, and cut my heart.
    And yet since these thy contradictions
Are properly a crosse felt by thy sonne —
With but foure words, my words, *Thy will be done.*

THE PILGRIMAGE

I TRAVELL'D on, seeing the hill where lay
My expectation.
A long it was and weary way.
The gloomy cave of Desperation
I left on th' one, and on the other side
The rock of Pride.

And so I came to phansie's medow strow'd
With many a flower.
Fain would I here have made abode,
But I was quicken'd by my houre.
So to care's cops I came, and there got through
With much ado.

That led me to the wilde of passion, which
Some call the wold;
A wasted place, but sometimes rich.
Here I was robb'd of all my gold
Save one good Angell, which a friend had ti'd
Close to my side.

At length I got unto the gladsome hill,
Where lay my hope,
Where lay my heart. And climbing still,
When I had gain'd the brow and top,
A lake of brackish waters on the ground
Was all I found.

With that abash'd and struck with many a sting
Of swarming fears,
I fell and cry'd, Alas my King!
Can both the way and end be tears?
Yet taking heart I rose, and then perceiv'd
I was deceiv'd;

My hill was further. So I flung away,
Yet heard a crie
Just as I went, *None goes that way*
And lives! If that be all, said I,
After so foul a journey death is fair,
And but a chair.

X

SUFFERING

PREFACE

IN one of the closing poems of the preceding Group, THE CROSSE, Herbert complains that ill health is crippling his powers and rendering him unfit for work. Undoubtedly illness had much to do with the restlessness and despondency which the poems of Group IX describe. The fear of it had long been in his mind, and was expressed as early as 1622 in that letter to his mother from which I have already quoted. During the Crisis period it comes out in THE PRIESTHOOD as another reason for hesitation when he is just coming to a decision.

> *Should I presume*
> *To wear thy habit, the severe attire*
> *My slender compositions might consume.*
> *I am both foul and brittle.*

Herbert's constitution was naturally frail. Speaking of his *sicknesses* in EASTER WINGS he says, *My tender age in sorrow did beginne.* In the letter of 1610 to his mother he mentions *my late ague.* In 1617 he writes his stepfather: *You know I was sick last vacation, neither am I yet recovered, so that I am fain ever and anon to buy somewhat tending towards my health.* Walton says that "He had often de-

sign'd to leave the University and decline all Study, which he thought did impair his health, for he had a body apt to a Consumption and to Fevers and other infirmities." Later, Walton writes: "About the year 1629 Mr. Herbert was seiz'd with a sharp Quotidian Ague. He became his own Physitian and cur'd himself of his Ague by forbearing Drink, and not eating any Meat, no not Mutton nor a Hen or Pidgeon, unless they were salted. And by such a constant Dyet he remov'd his Ague, but with inconveniencies that were worse; for he brought upon himself a disposition to Rheumes and other weaknesses and a supposed Consumption."

Probably this severe illness occurred somewhat earlier in the Crisis period than Walton here states; for Herbert married in March, 1629, and Walton in another passage says that before "he declar'd his resolution both to marry and to enter into the Sacred Orders of Priesthood . . . his health was apparently improv'd to a good degree of strength and chearfulness." In any case, it was but a few years later that he undertook his work at Bemerton with consumption well under way. The seeds of it were provided by his natural constitution; its development was advanced by the physical and mental experiences of the Crisis; and its end was assured by his taking up a new and anxious form of life under circumstances where introspection and depression were inevitable.

There is no sharp dividing line parting this Group of poems from the preceding. They are separated rather by the varying degrees of emphasis laid on motives common to the two. Throughout them both ring notes of disappointment over the priesthood, despondency, rebellion, dulness, self-reproach, penitence, mental perplexity, bodily pain, fear of God's alienation, and the bitterness of lifelong purposes coming to an end. This sad material I have tried to set in order. The poems which are chiefly dominated by the earlier emotions mentioned, I place in Group IX; those ruled by the later, in Group X. In the former, the mental side of his distress is uppermost, — his intellectual discontent. In the second, physical suffering declares itself, which still, after the manner of the love-poets, he attributes to some possible fault in himself and negligence on the part of the great Friend.

It is noticeable how comparatively slight a place in these laments Herbert gives to regrets for the broken priesthood. While it seems certain that two clear purposes ran together throughout Herbert's life, the purpose to be a priest and that to be a poet, the former remained only a purpose until twelve thirteenths of his short life were gone. The latter passed out of the stage of resolution and became a diligently prosecuted reality as early as 1610. That his poetic work is to end he mourns in GRIEF, DULNESSE, and THE FORERUNNERS, and to it he

alludes at the close of THE FLOWER. But there is little direct mention of the cessation of his priestly work. I think this must be explained by the highly individualistic conception of religion which he held. Repeatedly I have pointed out how his holy aspirations confine themselves to drawing close the ties between God and his own soul. Possibly he may have regarded these essentially personal relations as those best fitted for expression in poetry. At any rate, it is of his own salvation that he regularly speaks. He will be God's child; will love Him and be loved. The desire to sanctify himself for the sake of others rarely appears. We cannot comprehend a great nature unless we are willing to observe its limitations. Herbert shared those of his age. Its noblest work was to take the single soul and set it before God. Piety as personal allegiance was its special Gospel, a partial Gospel no doubt as are the thoughts about religion of each succeeding age. But partial as it was, it was a real and weighty part, and it made a permanent contribution to the spiritual resources of our race. His priesthood Herbert accordingly thought of as primarily the dedication of himself to God. When it appeared that God wanted him not here, but above, he experienced few regrets over priestly work left undone. Regrets he has. Sighs and groans abound. But they are those of the lover conscious of his own lack of desert, and uncertain whether at last he may find favor in the loved one's sight.

On the other hand, Herbert has for more than twenty years been studious of poetry. In it he has been conscious of something more like public service than even the priesthood yielded. The latter has been principally a means of effecting his own salvation; the former, of obeying the laws of beauty, and counteracting certain evil tendencies of his time. To its delicate demands he still steadily holds himself. These closing cries of pain are guarded, and given as beautiful a form as ever THE ELIXER or MORTIFICATION had in the proud Cambridge days. I find no falling off, no slovenliness, in all this preoccupied period. THE FLOWER is one of his most subtly beautiful pieces, though declaring itself to be very late. And THE FORERUNNERS, VERTUE, LIFE, and THE GLANCE, which I believe must stand in the Death Group, stand also in the very front rank of Herbert's performance.

I have already indicated the scheme of my arrangement. It follows the gradually increasing prominence of the consciousness of bodily ill. There runs through the early poems of the Group — GRIEVE NOT, CONFESSION, THE STORM, COMPLAINING — a fear that God has withdrawn Himself. This changes in the AFFLICTIONS, SIGHS AND GRONES, and LONGING, to a sense of physical pain, a pain which he believes, though sent by God, is sent in love. In THE GLIMPSE, A PARODIE, JOSEPH'S COAT, and JESU, there springs up a kind of

tender playfulness between him, the sufferer, an
the Friend who brings the bitter gift. And in on
of the sweet intervals of suffering, reported i
THE FLOWER, full joy and peace are felt in th
presence of the loved one.

BITTER-SWEET

Ah my deare angrie Lord,
  Since thou dost love, yet strike,
Cast down, yet help afford,
  Sure I will do the like.

I will complain, yet praise;
  I will bewail, approve;
And all my sowre-sweet dayes
  I will lament, and love.

JUSTICE

I CANNOT skill of these thy wayes.
Lord, thou didst make me, yet thou woundest me;
Lord, thou dost wound me, yet thou dost relieve me;
Lord, thou relievest, yet I die by thee;
Lord, thou dost kill me, yet thou dost reprieve me.

But when I mark my life and praise,
Thy justice me most fitly payes;
For *I do praise thee, yet I praise thee not;*
My prayers mean thee, yet my prayers stray;
I would do well, yet sinne the hand hath got;
My soul doth love thee, yet it loves delay.
I cannot skill of these my wayes.

GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT, &c.

(EPHESIANS VI, 30)

And art thou grieved, sweet and sacred Dove,
When I am sowre
And crosse thy love?
Grieved for me? The God of strength and power
Griev'd for a worm, which when I tread
I passe away and leave it dead?

Then weep mine eyes, the God of love doth grieve.
Weep foolish heart,
And weeping live.
For death is drie as dust. Yet if ye part,
End as the night whose sable hue
Your sinnes expresse: melt into dew.

When sawcie mirth shall knock or call at doore,
Cry out, Get hence,
Or cry no more.
Almightie God doth grieve, he puts on sense.
I sinne not to my grief alone,
But to my God's too; he doth grone.

Oh take thy lute, and tune it to a strain
Which may with thee
All day complain.
There can no discord but in ceasing be.
Marbles can weep; and surely strings
More bowels have then such hard things.

Lord, I adjudge my self to tears and grief,
Ev'n endlesse tears
Without relief.
If a cleare spring for me no time forbears,
But runnes although I be not drie,
I am no Crystall, what shall I?

Yet if I wail not still, since still to wail
Nature denies,
And flesh would fail
If my deserts were masters of mine eyes,
Lord, pardon, for thy sonne makes good
My want of tears with store of bloud.

CONFESSION

O WHAT a cunning guest
Is this same grief! Within my heart I made
Closets; and in them many a chest;
And like a master in my trade,
In those chests, boxes; in each box, a till;
Yet grief knows all, and enters when he will.

No scrue, no piercer can
Into a piece of timber work and winde
As God's afflictions into man,
When he a torture hath design'd.
They are too subtill for the subt'llest hearts,
And fall, like rheumes, upon the tendrest parts.

We are the earth, and they,
Like moles within us, heave, and cast about;
And till they foot and clutch their prey
They never cool, much lesse give out.
No smith can make such locks but they have keyes.
Closets are halls to them; and hearts, high-wayes.

Onely an open breast
Doth shut them out, so that they cannot enter.
Or, if they enter, cannot rest
But quickly seek some new adventure.
Smooth open hearts no fastning have, but fiction
Doth give a hold and handle to affliction.

Wherefore my faults and sinnes,
Lord, I acknowledge. Take thy plagues away.
For since confession pardon winnes,
I challenge here the brightest day,
The clearest diamond. Let them do their best,
They shall be thick and cloudie to my breast.

THE STORM

If as the windes and waters here below
Do flie and flow,
My sighs and tears as busie were above,
Sure they would move
And much affect thee, as tempestuous times
Amaze poore mortals and object their crimes.

Starres have their storms, ev'n in a high degree,
As well as we.
A throbbing conscience spurred by remorse
Hath a strange force.
It quits the earth, and mounting more and more,
Dares to assault thee and besiege thy doore.

There it stands knocking, to thy musick's wrong,
And drowns the song.
Glorie and honour are set by till it
An answer get.
Poets have wrong'd poore storms. Such dayes are best;
They purge the aire without, within the breast.

SION

Lord, with what glorie wast thou serv'd of old,
When Solomon's temple stood and flourished!
Where most things were of purest gold.
The wood was all embellished
With flowers and carvings, mysticall and rare.
All show'd the builder's, crav'd the seer's care.

Yet all this glorie, all this pomp and state
Did not affect thee much, was not thy aim;
Something there was that sow'd debate.
Wherefore thou quitt'st thy ancient claim,
And now thy Architecture meets with sinne;
For all thy frame and fabrick is within.

There thou art struggling with a peevish heart,
Which sometimes crosseth thee, thou sometimes it.
The fight is hard on either part.
Great God doth fight, he doth submit.
All Solomon's sea of brasse and world of stone
Is not so deare to thee as one good grone.

And truly brasse and stones are heavie things,
Tombes for the dead, not temples fit for thee.
But grones are quick and full of wings,
And all their motions upward be.
And ever as they mount, like larks they sing.
The note is sad, yet musick for a king.

COMPLAINING

Do not beguile my heart,
Because thou art
My power and wisdome. Put me not to shame,
Because I am
Thy clay that weeps, thy dust that calls.

Thou art the Lord of glorie.
The deed and storie
Are both thy due. But I a silly flie,
That live or die
According as the weather falls.

Art thou all justice, Lord?
Shows not thy word
More attributes? Am I all throat or eye,
To weep or crie?
Have I no parts but those of grief?

Let not thy wrathfull power
Afflict my houre,
My inch of life. Or let thy gracious power
Contract my houre,
That I may climbe and finde relief.

AFFLICTION

Kill me not ev'ry day,
Thou Lord of life; since thy one death for me
Is more then all my deaths can be,
Though I in broken pay
Die over each houre of Methusalem's stay.

If all men's tears were let
Into one common sewer, sea, and brine,
What were they all compar'd to thine?
Wherein if they were set,
They would discolour thy most bloudy sweat.

Thou art my grief alone,
Thou Lord, conceal it not. And as thou art
All my delight, so all my smart.
Thy crosse took up in one,
By way of imprest, all my future mone.

AFFLICTION

My heart did heave, and there came forth, *O God!*
By that I knew that thou wast in the grief,
To guide and govern it to my relief,
Making a scepter of the rod.
Hadst thou not had thy part,
Sure the unruly sigh had broke my heart.

But since thy breath gave me both life and shape,
Thou knowst my tallies; and when there's assign'd
So much breath to a sigh, what's then behinde?
Or if some yeares with it escape,
The sigh then onely is
A gale to bring me sooner to my blisse.

Thy life on earth was grief, and thou art still
Constant unto it, making it to be
A point of honour now to grieve in me,
And in thy members suffer ill.
They who lament one crosse,
Thou dying dayly, praise thee to thy losse.

AFFLICTION

Broken in pieces all asunder,
Lord, hunt me not,
A thing forgot,
Once a poore creature, now a wonder,
A wonder tortur'd in the space
Betwixt this world and that of grace.

My thoughts are all a case of knives,
Wounding my heart
With scatter'd smart,
As watring pots give flowers their lives.
Nothing their furie can controll
While they do wound and prick my soul.

All my attendants are at strife,
Quitting their place
Unto my face.
Nothing performs the task of life.
The elements are let loose to fight,
And while I live trie out their right.

Oh help, my God! Let not their plot
Kill them and me,
And also thee,
Who art my life. Dissolve the knot,
As the sunne scatters by his light
All the rebellions of the night.

Then shall those powers which work for grief
Enter thy pay,
And day by day
Labour thy praise and my relief;
With care and courage building me,
Till I reach heav'n, and much more thee.

SIGHS AND GRONES

O do not use me
After my sinnes! Look not on my desert,
But on thy glorie! Then thou wilt reform
And not refuse me; for thou onely art
The mightie God, but I a sillie worm.
O do not bruise me!

O do not urge me!
For what account can thy ill steward make?
I have abus'd thy stock, destroy'd thy woods,
Suckt all thy magazens. My head did ake,
Till it found out how to consume thy goods.
O do not scourge me!

O do not blinde me!
I have deserv'd that an Egyptian night
Should thicken all my powers, because my lust
Hath still sow'd fig-leaves to exclude thy light.
But I am frailtie, and already dust.
O do not grinde me!

O do not fill me
With the turn'd viall of thy bitter wrath!
For thou hast other vessels full of bloud,
A part whereof my Saviour empti'd hath,
Ev'n unto death. Since he di'd for my good,
O do not kill me!

But O reprieve me!
For thou hast *life* and *death* at thy command.
Thou art both *Judge* and *Saviour*, *feast* and *rod*,
Cordiall and *Corrosive*. Put not thy hand
Into the bitter box, but O my God,
My God, relieve me!

LONGING

With sick and famisht eyes,
With doubling knees and weary bones,
To thee my cries,
To thee my grones,
To thee my sighs, my tears ascend.
No end?

My throat, my soul is hoarse.
My heart is wither'd like a ground
Which thou dost curse.
My thoughts turn round
And make me giddie. Lord, I fall,
Yet call.

From thee all pitie flows.
Mothers are kinde because thou art,
And dost dispose
To them a part.
Their infants them, and they suck thee
More free.

Bowels of pitie, heare!
Lord of my soul, love of my minde,
Bow down thine eare!
Let not the winde
Scatter my words, and in the same
Thy name!

Look on my sorrows round!
Mark well my furnace! O what flames,
What heats abound!
What griefs, what shames!
Consider, Lord! Lord, bow thine eare
And heare!

Lord Jesu, thou didst bow
Thy dying head upon the tree;
O be not now
More dead to me!
Lord heare! *Shall he that made the eare,*
Not heare?

Behold, thy dust doth stirre,
It moves, it creeps, it aims at thee.
Wilt thou deferre
To succour me,
Thy pile of dust, wherein each crumme
Sayes, *Come?*

To thee help appertains.
Hast thou left all things to their course,
And laid the reins
Upon the horse?
Is all lockt? Hath a sinner's plea
No key?

Indeed the world's thy book,
Where all things have their lease assign'd;
Yet a meek look
Hath interlin'd.
Thy board is full, yet humble guests
Finde nests.

Thou tarriest, while I die
And fall to nothing. Thou dost reigne
And rule on high,
While I remain
In bitter grief. Yet am I stil'd
Thy childe.

Lord, didst thou leave thy throne
Not to relieve? How can it be
That thou art grown
Thus hard to me?
Were sinne alive, good cause there were
To bear.

But now both sinne is dead,
And all thy promises live and bide.
That wants his head;
These speak and chide,
And in thy bosome poure my tears
As theirs.

Lord Jesu, heare my heart,
Which hath been broken now so long,
That ev'ry part
Hath got a tongue!
Thy beggars grow; rid them away
To day.

My love, my sweetnesse, heare!
By these thy feet, at which my heart
Lies all the yeare,
Pluck out thy dart
And heal my troubled breast which cryes,
Which dyes.

THE GLIMPSE

Whither away delight?
Thou cam'st but now; wilt thou so soon depart,
And give me up to night?
For many weeks of lingring pain and smart
But one half houre of comfort for my heart?

Me thinks delight should have
More skill in musick and keep better time.
Wert thou a winde or wave,
They quickly go and come with lesser crime.
Flowers look about, and die not in their prime.

Thy short abode and stay
Feeds not, but addes to the desire of meat.
Lime begg'd of old (they say)
A neighbour spring to cool his inward heat,
Which by the spring's accesse grew much more great.

In hope of thee my heart
Pickt here and there a crumme, and would not die;
But constant to his part
Whenas my fears foretold this, did replie,
A slender thread a gentle guest will tie.

Yet if the heart that wept
Must let thee go, return when it doth knock.
Although thy heap be kept
For future times, the droppings of the stock
May oft break forth, and never break the lock.

If I have more to spinne,
The wheel shall go so that thy stay be short.
Thou knowst how grief and sinne
Disturb the work. O make me not their sport,
Who by thy coming may be made a court!

A PARODIE

Soul's joy, when thou art gone,
And I alone —
Which cannot be,
Because thou dost abide with me
And I depend on thee —

Yet when thou dost suppresse
The cheerfulnesse
Of thy abode,
And in my powers not stirre abroad,
But leave me to my load;

O what a damp and shade
Doth me invade!
No stormie night
Can so afflict or so affright
As thy eclipsed light.

Ah Lord! Do not withdraw,
Lest want of aw
Make Sinne appeare,
And when thou dost but shine lesse cleare,
Say that thou art not here.

And then what life I have,
While Sinne doth rave,
And falsly boast
That I may seek but thou art lost,
Thou, and alone thou, know'st.

O what a deadly cold
Doth me infold!
I half beleeve
That Sinne sayes true. But while I grieve,
Thou com'st and dost relieve.

DISCIPLINE

Throw away thy rod,
Throw away thy wrath.
O my God,
Take the gentle path.

For my heart's desire
Unto thine is bent.
I aspire
To a full consent.

Not a word or look
I affect to own,
But by book,
And thy book alone.

Though I fail, I weep.
Though I halt in pace,
Yet I creep
To the throne of grace.

Then let wrath remove.
Love will do the deed:
For with love
Stonie hearts will bleed.

Love is swift of foot.
Love's a man of warre,
And can shoot,
And can hit from farre.

Who can scape his bow?
That which wrought on thee,
Brought thee low,
Needs must work on me.

Throw away thy rod.
Though man frailties hath,
Thou art God.
Throw away thy wrath.

JOSEPH'S COAT

Wounded I sing, tormented I indite,
  Thrown down I fall into a bed and rest.
Sorrow hath chang'd its note; such is his will
  Who changeth all things as him pleaseth best.
For well he knows if but one grief and smart
  Among my many had his full career,
Sure it would carrie with it ev'n my heart,
  And both would runne untill they found a biere
To fetch the bodie, both being due to grief.
  But he hath spoil'd the race, and giv'n to anguish
One of Joye's coats, ticing it with relief
  To linger in me, and together languish.
I live to shew his power who once did bring
My *joyes* to *weep*, and now my *griefs* to *sing*.

JESU

Jesu is in my heart, his sacred name
Is deeply carved there. But th' other week
A great affliction broke the little frame,
Ev'n all to pieces; which I went to seek.
And first I found the corner where was *J*,
After where *E S*, and next where *U* was graved.
When I had got these parcels, instantly
I sat me down to spell them; and perceived
That to my broken heart he was *I ease you*,
And to my whole is *J E S U*.

THE FLOWER

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
Are thy returns! Ev'n as the flowers in spring,
To which, besides their own demean,
The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring.
Grief melts away
Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing.

Who would have thought my shrivel'd heart
Could have recover'd greennesse? It was gone
Quite under ground, as flowers depart
To see their mother-root when they have blown;
Where they together
All the hard weather,
Dead to the world, keep house unknown.

These are thy wonders, Lord of power,
Killing and quickning, bringing down to hell
And up to heaven in an houre;
Making a chiming of a passing-bell.
We say amisse,
This or that is;
Thy word is all, if we could spell.

O that I once past changing were,
Fast in thy Paradise, where no flower can wither!
Many a spring I shoot up fair,
Off'ring at heav'n, growing and groning thither;
Nor doth my flower
Want a spring-showre,
My sinnes and I joining together.

But while I grow in a straight line,
Still upwards bent, as if heav'n were mine own,
Thy anger comes, and I decline.
What frost to that? What pole is not the zone
Where all things burn,
When thou dost turn,
And the least frown of thine is shown?

And now in age I bud again,
After so many deaths I live and write;
I once more smell the dew and rain,
And relish versing. O my onely light,
It cannot be
That I am he
On whom thy tempests fell all night.

These are thy wonders, Lord of love,
To make us see we are but flowers that glide.
Which when we once can finde and prove,
Thou hast a garden for us where to bide.
Who would be more,
Swelling through store,
Forfeit their Paradise by their pride.

XI

DEATH

PREFACE

IN the parish record of Bemerton appears this entry: "Mr. George Herbert Esq., Parson of Fuggleston and Bemerton, was buried 3 day of March 1632." This record is confirmed by Herbert's will, which was proved on March 12, 1632. As the new year then began on Lady Day, March 25, the year would be our 1633. This date is confirmed by Herbert's letter to Ferrar, inclosing his Notes on Valdesso, which bears date of September 29, 1632; and by the will of his niece, which was proved by Herbert in October, 1632. Herbert was instituted on April 26, 1630, so that the life at Bemerton covered almost exactly three years. Aubrey tells how Herbert "was buried (according to his own desire) with the singing service for the burial of the dead, by the singing men of Sarum." He was laid, according to Walton, "in his own Church under the Altar, and cover'd with a Gravestone without any inscription." He died without issue. His wife, whom Aubrey thought a strikingly handsome woman, a few years later married Sir Robert Cook, and by him had children.

Herbert had long notice of death. Consumption overcame him slowly, and allowed him to retain his mental powers to the last. Until within a few

months of the end, he read Prayers each day in the little chapel opposite his house. And though a month before his death Mr. Duncon, sent by Ferrar, found him unable to sit up, his discourse was such, Mr. Duncon told Walton, "that after almost forty years it remained still fresh in his memory." The Sunday before he died he sang his own songs, accompanying himself as usual on the lute. According to Walton he died without pain, in his last hour speaking with his family and friend about religion, business, and the care of those he was to leave.

To this fact, that Herbert's long dying was a life in death, we owe the splendid series of his death-songs. A few of those included in the preceding Group may possibly belong to the period of Crisis; but the great body of them, and probably all that appear in the present Group, spring from the last year or two of Herbert's life. As we have seen, every phase of his inner moods was interesting to him, and easily became a poetic subject out of which something beautiful might be fashioned. If because our distresses do not so readily put on *a coat of joy*, we sometimes hold it half a sin that Herbert should put in words the grief he feels, we should remember that he published none of his poems, and that in poetry he probably found one of his few defences against pain. *Wounded I sing; tormented I indite*, he says. By objectifying his experiences he detaches himself from them.

Donne in his Triple Fool had tried this palliative:

"As th' earth's inward narrow crooked lanes
Do purge sea-water's fretful salt away,
I thought if I could draw my pains
Through rhyme's vexation, I should them allay.
Grief brought to numbers cannot be so fierce,
For he tames it that fetters it in verse."

I have thought it well to gather into a brief final Group Herbert's poems which refer to approaching death. How unlike they are to the clever verses written at Cambridge on the same subject! All the poems of this Group have in them the note of reality, whether like THE FORERUNNERS and LIFE they mourn the cessation of his verse, like GRIEF and HOME utter an anguished cry, like THE GLANCE and THE DAWNING turn to the *sweet originall joy* of God's love, or like VERTUE, TIME, and A DIALOGUE-ANTHEME, sport with the impotence of death. In all of them there is veritable experience carried up into well-ordered beauty. The methods of Herbert's Life did not forsake him in the leaving of it.

THE FORERUNNERS

The harbingers are come. See, see their mark!
White is their colour, and behold my head!
But must they have my brain? Must they dispark
Those sparkling notions which therein were bred?
Must dulnesse turn me to a clod?
Yet have they left me, *Thou art still my God.*

Good men ye be to leave me my best room,
Ev'n all my heart, and what is lodged there.
I passe not, I, what of the rest become,
So *Thou art still my God* be out of fear.
He will be pleased with that dittie;
And if I please him, I write fine and wittie.

Farewell sweet phrases, lovely metaphors.
But will ye leave me thus? When ye before
Of stews and brothels onely knew the doores,
Then did I wash you with my tears, and more,
Brought you to Church well drest and clad.
My God must have my best, ev'n all I had.

Lovely enchanting language, sugar-cane,
Hony of roses, whither wilt thou flie?
Hath some fond lover tic'd thee to thy bane?
And wilt thou leave the Church and love a stie?
Fie, thou wilt soil thy broider'd coat,
And hurt thy self and him that sings the note.

Let foolish lovers, if they will love dung,
With canvas, not with arras clothe their shame.
Let follie speak in her own native tongue.
True beautie dwells on high. Ours is a flame
But borrow'd thence to light us thither.
Beautie and beauteous words should go together.

Yet if you go, I passe not. Take your way!
For, *Thou art still my God*, is all that ye
Perhaps with more embellishment can say.
Go birds of spring! Let winter have his fee!
Let a bleak palenesse chalk the doore,
So all within be livelier then before.

LIFE

I MADE a posie while the day ran by.
Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie
My life within this band.
But time did becken to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away
And wither'd in my hand.

My hand was next to them, and then my heart.
I took, without more thinking, in good part
Time's gentle admonition;
Who did so sweetly death's sad taste convey,
Making my minde to smell my fatall day,
Yet sugring the suspicion.

Farewell deare flowers! Sweetly your time ye spent,
Fit, while ye liv'd, for smell or ornament,
And after death for cures.
I follow straight without complaints or grief,
Since if my scent be good, I care not if
It be as short as yours.

GRIEF

O who will give me tears? Come all ye springs,
Dwell in my head and eyes. Come clouds, and rain.
My grief hath need of all the watry things
That nature hath produc'd. Let ev'ry vein
Suck up a river to supply mine eyes,
My weary weeping eyes, too drie for me
Unlesse they get new conduits, new supplies
To bear them out, and with my state agree.
What are two shallow foords, two little spouts
Of a lesse world? The greater is but small,
A narrow cupboard for my griefs and doubts,
Which want provision in the midst of all.
Verses, ye are too fine a thing, too wise
For my rough sorrows. Cease, be dumbe and mute,
Give up your feet and running to mine eyes,
And keep your measures for some lover's lute,
Whose grief allows him musick and a ryme.
For mine excludes both measure, tune, and time.
Alas, my God!

HOME

Come Lord, my head doth burn, my heart is sick,
While thou dost ever, ever stay.
Thy long deferrings wound me to the quick.
My spirit gaspeth night and day.
O show thy self to me,
Or take me up to thee!

How canst thou stay, considering the pace
The bloud did make which thou didst waste?
When I behold it trickling down thy face,
I never saw thing make such haste.
O show thy, &c.

When man was lost, thy pitie lookt about
To see what help in th' earth or skie.
But there was none, at least no help without;
The help did in thy bosome lie.
O show thy, &c.

There lay thy sonne. And must he leave that nest
That hive of sweetnesse, to remove
Thraldome from those who would not at a feast
Leave one poore apple for thy love?
O show thy, &c.

He did, he came. O my Redeemer deare,
After all this canst thou be strange?
So many yeares baptiz'd, and not appeare?
As if thy love could fail or change?
O show thy, &c.

Yet if thou stayest still, why must I stay?
My God, what is this world to me,
This world of wo? Hence all ye clouds, away,
Away! I must get up and see.
O show thy, &c.

What is this weary world, this meat and drink,
That chains us by the teeth so fast?
What is this woman-kinde, which I can wink
Into a blacknesse and distaste?
O show thy, &c.

With one small sigh thou gav'st me th' other day
I blasted all the joyes about me,
And scouling on them as they pin'd away,
Now come again, said I, and flout me.
O show thy, &c.

Nothing but drought and dearth, but bush and brake,
Which way so-e're I look, I see.
Some may dream merrily, but when they wake,
They dresse themselves and come to thee.
O show thy, &c.

We talk of harvests; there are no such things
But when we leave our corn and hay.
There is no fruitfull yeare but that which brings
The last and lov'd, though dreadfull day.
O show thy, &c.

Oh loose this frame, this knot of man untie!
That my free soul may use her wing,
Which now is pinion'd with mortalitie,
As an intangled, hamper'd thing.
O show thy, &c.

What have I left that I should stay and grone?
The most of me to heav'n is fled.
My thoughts and joyes are all packt up and gone,
And for their old acquaintance plead.
O show thy, &c.

Come dearest Lord, passe not this holy season,
My flesh and bones and joynts do pray.
And ev'n my verse, when by the ryme and reason
The word is, *Stay*, sayes ever, *Come!*
O show thy self to me,
Or take me up to thee!

THE GLANCE

When first thy sweet and gracious eye
Vouchsaf'd ev'n in the midst of youth and night
To look upon me, who before did lie
Weltring in sinne,
I felt a sugred strange delight,
Passing all cordials made by any art,
Bedew, embalme, and overrunne my heart,
And take it in.

Since that time many a bitter storm
My soul hath felt, ev'n able to destroy,
Had the malicious and ill-meaning harm
His swing and sway.
But still thy sweet originall joy,
Sprung from thine eye, did work within my soul,
And surging griefs, when they grew bold, controll,
And got the day.

If thy first glance so powerfull be,
A mirth but open'd and seal'd up again,
What wonders shall we feel when we shall see
Thy full-ey'd love!
When thou shalt look us out of pain,
And one aspect of thine spend in delight
More then a thousand sunnes disburse in light,
In heav'n above.

THE DAWNING

Awake sad heart, whom sorrow ever drowns!
Take up thine eyes, which feed on earth.
Unfold thy forehead gather'd into frowns.
Thy Saviour comes, and with him mirth,
Awake, awake!
And with a thankfull heart his comforts take.
But thou dost still lament, and pine, and crie,
And feel his death, but not his victorie.

Arise sad heart! If thou dost not withstand,
Christ's resurrection thine may be,
Do not by hanging down break from the hand
Which as it riseth, raiseth thee.
Arise, arise!
And with his buriall-linen drie thine eyes.
Christ left his grave-clothes that we might, when grief
Draws tears or bloud, not want an handkerchief.

VERTUE

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridall of the earth and skie;
The dew shall weep thy fall to night,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angrie and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet dayes and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie;
My musick shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Onely a sweet and vertuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

TIME

Meeting with Time, slack thing, said I,
Thy sithe is dull, whet it for shame.
No marvell, Sir, he did replie,
If it at length deserve some blame.
But where one man would have me grinde it,
Twentie for one too sharp do finde it.

Perhaps some such of old did passe,
Who above all things lov'd this life;
To whom thy sithe a hatchet was,
Which now is but a pruning-knife.
Christ's coming hath made man thy debter,
Since by thy cutting he grows better.

And in his blessing thou art blest.
For where thou onely wert before
An executioner at best,
Thou art a gard'ner now, and more —
An usher to convey our souls
Beyond the utmost starres and poles.

And this is that makes life so long,
While it detains us from our God.
Ev'n pleasures here increase the wrong,
And length of dayes lengthen the rod.
Who wants the place where God doth dwell,
Partakes already half of hell.

Of what strange length must that needs be
Which ev'n eternitie excludes!
Thus farre Time heard me patiently,
Then chafing said, This man deludes:
What do I hear before his doore?
He doth not crave lesse time, but more.

A DIALOGUE-ANTHEME

Christian. Death

Chr. Alas, poore Death, where is thy glorie?
Where is thy famous force, thy ancient sting?
Dea. *Alas poore mortall, void of storie,*
Go spell and reade how I have kill'd thy King.
Chr. Poore death! And who was hurt thereby?
Thy curse being laid on him, makes thee accurst.
Dea. *Let losers talk! Yet thou shalt die;*
These arms shall crush thee. Chr. Spare not, do thy worst.
I shall be one day better then before;
Thou so much worse that thou shalt be no more.

XII

ADDITIONAL AND DOUBTFUL POEMS

PREFACE

BESIDES the poems composing THE TEMPLE, Herbert wrote other verse. That there was a considerable body of this, and that it was of a secular sort, has often been asserted. But the assertion rests on no evidence, and in my larger work I have shown that it is inherently improbable. There are, however, a few additional poems which evidence of varying degrees of worth connects with Herbert's name, and these I gather into a final Group.

A few of those printed in my large edition I here reject. As shown there it is improbable that Herbert ever saw the lines to the Queen of Bohemia, or those to Lord Danvers and Sir John Danvers. Some of the Psalms there printed he may have written; but if so, they were justly rejected as unworthy to stand beside his beautiful rendering of THE TWENTY-THIRD PSALM. THE PARADOX has his name written upon it by an unknown copyist, and Nahum Tate thought THE CONVERT his. But none of these can be traced directly to his hand.

The case is different with THE HOLY COMMUNION, LOVE, TRINITIE-SUNDAY, EVEN-SONG, THE KNELL, and PERSEVERANCE. These appear in the Williams Manuscript, intermingled with its other

poems. That manuscript, containing nearly half of the poems subsequently published in THE TEMPLE, certainly originated in Herbert's study. Its general handwriting is that of a copyist; but its many corrections and its large body of Latin poems are in Herbert's hand. We must therefore accept these poems as his, or else suppose that, though composed by some one else, he had them copied as favorites into a book of his own verse. But their inferiority of style is quite as grave an objection to this supposition as to his own authorship. They must then be classed among his refuse work. In the years that intervened between the composition of the Williams Manuscript and his death his taste had ripened. Having already written other poems on THE HOLY COMMUNION, LOVE, and TRINITIE-SUNDAY, he rejected these, wrote later a substitute for the EVEN-SONG, and struck out THE KNELL and PERSEVERANCE altogether. While these poems in themselves are youthful and of small aesthetic value, they are of importance as showing that Herbert did not preserve all his verse, but finally left for the printer only such as his critical taste approved.

Only one of the poems in this Group was so approved, THE CHURCH MILITANT. It is one of his four long and labored poems, and may have been designed as a kind of counterpart to THE CHURCH-PORCH. Ferrar printed it as an appendix or third part of THE TEMPLE. The name, THE

Temple, does not appear in the Williams Manuscript, which has no title-page. The running-title at the head of the pages is The Church. This is also the running-title of the central portion of the book as finally printed. Perhaps, then, Herbert's plan — or Ferrar's — was to call the total work The Temple, and to let it consist of three parts: the main structure, conceived as The Church itself, with two adjuncts, — The Church-Porch, and The Church Militant. Yet the first two divisions are related so much more closely to each other than is either to the third that The Church Militant may probably better be regarded as an altogether detached piece. Between The Church-Porch and The Church the lines of Superliminare are inserted as a connecting link, while at the close of The Church stands the word *FINIS* and a Gloria. There seems, therefore, to be an intended detachment of The Church Militant from the whole framework of The Temple. The Envoy after The Church Militant must mark the close of this poem, and not of the entire book.

To preserve this detachment, I adopt the traditional arrangement and place The Church Militant after the other authenticated poems. But it might well stand before them. To make plain the course of Herbert's development we should place it just after the Sonnets to his Mother. I, at least, have no doubt that it is his earliest considerable piece. Its style is more influenced by Donne than

is that of any of his other poems except the two SONNETS of 1610. There is an indication, too, of youth in the fact that while no half-page of THE CHURCH MILITANT shows sustained ease and mastery, one comes upon single lines of exceptional depth and promise, e. g.:

Doing nought
Which doth not meet with an eternall thought.

The sunne, though forward be his flight,
Listens behinde him and allows some light
Till all depart.

How low is he,
If God and man be sever'd infinitely!

Setting affliction to encounter pleasure.

In vice the copie still exceeds
The pattern, but not so in vertuous deeds.

Bits of poetry like these, shining among lines which are too often declamatory, forced, and obscure, declare the age and promise of their author. Nor is objective evidence of an early date lacking. In line 242 the Thames is said to be in danger of pollution through mingling its stream with the Seine. Herbert was too good a courtier to have written so after 1624, when Prince Charles was betrothed to Henrietta Maria, the French Princess. The allusion, too, to America as the land of gold (l. 250) would be more natural at the time when the Virginia Trading Company was in full activity

and hope than in the years after its dissolution in 1623.

But although THE CHURCH MILITANT is early, immature, and difficult in style, in its subject and method of treatment it is of marked originality; for it is, so far as I can discover, the first sketch of general Church history in our language. Single periods of that history had been already treated, as by Bede in his account of the English Church. Lives of the Saints had been written, and studies of Christian Antiquity. Of controversial works, like Bishop Jewel's Apology, there was no lack. But hitherto no Englishman had attempted to survey the progress of the Church as it came forth from little Judaea and mightily overran all the lands of the West. This dramatic theme Herbert seized, treated it in bold outline, and made of his poem a veritable landmark in English ecclesiastical history. In this, as in religious poetry, he is the pioneer of a large company. But he could not bring his experiments in this field so near perfection as he did in that of the religious love-lyric. There he needed only to explore his own soul, while for even a good outline of Church history a solid body of scholarship was necessary; and this at that time was inaccessible. Herbert's account is accordingly, like all early history, inaccurate, partisan, and often credulous. It is an astonishing evidence of the independence of his mind that it was written at all, and in all probability written before he was thirty years

of age. That this priority of Herbert in Church history has not been remarked shows how superficial has been the attention bestowed on his widely circulated little book.

Original, however, as Herbert is in the choice of a historical subject, he is no less original in his treatment of it. Most historians of the Church conceive it as an ecclesiastical organization, whose construction and vicissitudes they explore, the development of whose power and ritual they trace, and whose scheme of doctrine they vindicate. The enemies of the Church are accordingly unbelievers, persecuting sovereigns, or nations which refuse to accept its sway.

With the progress of the Church in this sense Herbert is in no way concerned. What interests him is the coming of righteousness on earth. The contests of the Church are not with those who question priestly authority. He never alludes to heretics, or creeds, or forms of worship; and when he mentions splendid outward organizations and the consolidation of ecclesiastical power, it is as a sign of danger, if not of decay. He is, in short, true to that conception of the Church continually announced in his poems, notably in SION, the conception which gave a name to his volume, and which I have abundantly discussed in sections of my large edition. He means by the Church the loving, temptable, aspiring, and ill-harmonized soul of man. It is no external institution. *All its frame*

and fabrick is within. The Church history which he would write is a description of the way in which the new mode of affectionate holiness revealed by Jesus Christ has been intermittently adopted and rejected by the nations of Europe. His Church history is accordingly, like that of Jonathan Edwards afterwards, a genuine History of Redemption.

It would be an error to claim for Herbert entire originality in this ethical idea of Church history. The greatest of the Fathers had thought of it in somewhat the same way. Augustine's City of God is a spiritual society of the righteous united by allegiance to a common divine Lord. It is true that, while Herbert is a man of piety, Augustine is also a statesman, with a range of vision, a complexity of interests, an acquaintance with men, and a philosophic grasp denied to Herbert. But all the more striking on this account becomes Herbert's independence. He knew and honored Augustine. He bequeathed a set of his works to his Fuggleston curate, Mr. Bostock. Undoubtedly his thoughts about THE CHURCH MILITANT were initiated by Augustine. But he did not allow himself to be dominated. He took from the City of God only what harmonized with his own individualistic genius, and under the name of THE CHURCH MILITANT pictured the world's growth in personal holiness.

The poem is divided into five parts, separated from one another by a refrain exalting the wisdom

of God. Part I describes the migration of Religion from its early home in the East to its settlement in Egypt; Part II, the advance of Religion through Greece to establish its empire in the West; Part III, the parallel advance of Sin; Part IV, the conquest of Religion by Sin at Rome; Part V, the ineffective attempts through reformation to set Religion free from Sin, and the probability of farther struggle in future as the two move together through America westward.

In my fifth Essay is related the curious refusal of the Vice-Chancellor to license Herbert's book on account of lines 235 and 236 of THE CHURCH MILITANT:

> *Religion stands on tip-toe in our land,*
> *Readie to passe to the American strand.*

This passage, as also line 247, might suggest that Herbert was thinking of the Puritan migration, the only colonization ever undertaken from England with religious aims. Such thoughts are natural for us in looking back, but not for him when looking forward. Even if the dates allowed, we cannot suppose that he would have sympathized with companies of obscure and wilful sectaries. That was not his disposition. The Pilgrims, however, did not sail till 1620; the Puritans not till 1628. This latter date was just about the time when the Williams Manuscript was probably drawn up, and in it was included THE CHURCH MILITANT. At the time

when the poem was written the Puritan migration was a small affair, and had attracted little attention. It is the Virginia Colony to which Herbert refers, that aristocratic colony with which his friend Ferrar was connected. What he has in mind is made clearer by a passage of THE COUNTRY PARSON, XXXII, in which he is planning work for younger sons: *If the young Gallant think these Courses dull and phlegmatick, where can he busie himself better than in those new Plantations and discoveryes which are not only a noble but also, as they may be handled, a religious imployment?* He simply means that on fresh soil religion has fresh opportunities. No other reference to America in THE TEMPLE speaks of it as religious ground.

From this Group of Additional Poems I have withdrawn three as having special importance elsewhere. The lines reported by Walton as inscribed in the Bemerton Parsonage I have placed at the beginning of Group VIII. The SONNETS of 1610 mark the rise of that RESOLVE which is set forth with early ardor, assurance, and comprehensiveness in the poems of Group II.

THE CHURCH MILITANT

Almightie Lord, who from thy glorious throne
Seest and rulest all things ev'n as one,
The smallest ant or atome knows thy power,
Known also to each minute of an houre.
Much more do Common-weals acknowledge thee
And wrap their policies in thy decree,
Complying with thy counsels, doing nought
Which doth not meet with an eternall thought.
But above all, thy Church and Spouse doth prove
Not the decrees of power, but bands of love.
Early didst thou arise to plant this vine,
Which might the more indeare it to be thine.
Spices come from the East; so did thy Spouse,
Trimme as the light, sweet as the laden boughs
Of *Noah's* shadie vine, chaste as the dove,
Prepar'd and fitted to receive thy love.
The course was westward, that the sunne might light
As well our understanding as our sight.
Where th' Ark did rest, there *Abraham* began
To bring the other Ark from *Canaan*.

Moses pursu'd this, but King *Solomon*
Finish'd and fixt the old religion.
When it grew loose, the Jews did hope in vain
By nailing Christ to fasten it again;
But to the Gentiles he bore crosse and all,
Rending with earthquakes the partition-wall.
Onely whereas the Ark in glorie shone,
Now with the crosse, as with a staffe, alone,
Religion, like a pilgrime, westward bent,
Knocking at all doores ever as she went.
Yet as the sunne, though forward be his flight,
Listens behinde him and allows some light
Till all depart; so went the Church her way,
Letting, while one foot stept, the other stay
Among the eastern nations for a time,
Till both removed to the western clime.
To *Egypt* first she came, where they did prove
Wonders of anger once, but now of love.
The ten Commandments there did flourish more
Then the ten bitter plagues had done before.
Holy *Macarius* and great *Anthonie*
Made *Pharaoh Moses*, changing th' historie.
Goshen was darknesse, *Egypt* full of lights,
Nilus for monsters brought forth Israelites.
Such power hath mightie Baptisme to produce
For things misshapen, things of highest use.
How deare to me, O God, thy counsels are!
Who may with thee compare?

Religion thence fled into *Greece*, where arts
Gave her the highest place in all men's hearts.
Learning was pos'd, Philosophie was set,
Sophisters taken in a fisher's net.
Plato and *Aristotle* were at a losse
And wheel'd about again to spell *Christ-Crosse*.
Prayers chas'd syllogismes into their den,
And *Ergo* was transform'd into *Amen*.
Though *Greece* took horse as soon as *Egypt* did,
And *Rome* as both, yet *Egypt* faster rid,
And spent her period and prefixed time
Before the other. *Greece* being past her prime,
Religion went to *Rome*, subduing those
Who, that they might subdue, made all their foes.
The Warrier his deere skarres no more resounds,
But seems to yeeld Christ hath the greater wounds,
Wounds willingly endur'd to work his blisse
Who by an ambush lost his Paradise.
The great heart stoops and taketh from the dust
A sad repentance, not the spoils of lust,
Quitting his spear, lest it should pierce again
Him in his members who for him was slain.
The Shepherd's hook grew to a scepter here,
Giving new names and numbers to the yeare.
But th' Empire dwelt in *Greece*, to comfort them
Who were cut short in *Alexander's* stemme.

In both of these Prowesse and Arts did tame
And tune men's hearts against the Gospel came;
Which using, and not fearing skill in th' one,
Or strength in th' other, did erect her throne.
Many a rent and struggling th' Empire knew,
(As dying things are wont) untill it flew
At length to *Germanie*, still westward bending,
And there the Churches festivall attending;
That as before Empire and Arts made way,
(For no lesse Harbingers would serve then they)
So they might still, and point us out the place
Where first the Church should raise her downcast face.
Strength levels grounds, Art makes a garden there,
Then showres Religion and makes all to bear.
Spain in the Empire shar'd with *Germanie*,
But *England* in the higher victorie;
Giving the Church a crown to keep her state
And not go lesse then she had done of late.
Constantine's British line meant this of old,
And did this mysterie wrap up and fold
Within a sheet of paper, which was rent
From time's great Chronicle and hither sent.
Thus both the Church and Sunne together ran
Unto the farthest old meridian.
How deare to me, O God, thy counsels are!
Who may with thee compare?

Much about one and the same time and place
Both where and when the Church began her race,
Sinne did set out of Eastern *Babylon*
And travell'd westward also. Journeying on
He chid the Church away where e're he came,
Breaking her peace and tainting her good name.
At first he got to *Egypt* and did sow
Gardens of gods, which ev'ry yeare did grow
Fresh and fine deities. They were at great cost
Who for a god clearely a sallet lost.
Ah, what a thing is man devoid of grace,
Adoring garlick with an humble face,
Begging his food of that which he may eat,
Starving the while he worshippeth his meat!
Who makes a root his god, how low is he,
If God and man be sever'd infinitely!
What wretchednesse can give him any room
Whose house is foul, while he adores his broom?
None will beleeve this now, though money be
In us the same transplanted foolerie.
Thus Sinne in *Egypt* sneaked for a while;
His highest was an ox or crocodile
And such poore game. Thence he to *Greece* doth passe;
And being craftier much then Goodnesse was,
He left behinde him garrisons of sinnes
To make good that which ev'ry day he winnes.
Here Sinne took heart, and for a garden-bed
Rich shrines and oracles he purchased.

He grew a gallant and would needs foretell
As well what should befall as what befell.
Nay, he became a poet, and would serve
His pills of sublimate in that conserve.
The world came both with hands and purses full
To this great lotterie, and all would pull.
But all was glorious cheating, brave deceit,
Where some poore truths were shuffled for a bait
To credit him, and to discredit those
Who after him should braver truths disclose.
From *Greece* he went to *Rome;* and as before
He was a God, now he's an Emperour.
Nero and others lodg'd him bravely there,
Put him in trust to rule the Romane sphere.
Glorie was his chief instrument of old,
Pleasure succeeded straight when that grew cold.
Which soon was blown to such a mightie flame
That though our Saviour did destroy the game,
Disparking oracles and all their treasure,
Setting affliction to encounter pleasure,
Yet did a rogue with hope of carnall joy
Cheat the most subtill nations. Who so coy,
So trimme, as *Greece* and *Egypt?* Yet their hearts
Are given over, for their curious arts,
To such Mahometan stupidities
As the old heathen would deem prodigies.
How deare to me, O God, thy counsels are!
Who may with thee compare?

Onely the West and *Rome* do keep them free
From this contagious infidelitie.
And this is all the Rock whereof they boast,
As *Rome* will one day finde unto her cost.
Sinne being not able to extirpate quite
The Churches here, bravely resolv'd one night
To be a Church-man too and wear a Mitre;
The old debauched ruffian would turn writer.
I saw him in his studie, where he sate
Busie in controversies sprung of late.
A gown and pen became him wondrous well.
His grave aspect had more of heav'n then hell:
Onely there was a handsome picture by,
To which he lent a corner of his eye.
As Sinne in *Greece* a Prophet was before,
And in old *Rome* a mightie Emperour,
So now being Priest he plainly did professe
To make a jest of Christ's three offices;
The rather since his scatter'd jugglings were
United now in one, both time and sphere.
From *Egypt* he took pettie deities,
From *Greece* oracular infallibilities,
And from old *Rome* the libertie of pleasure
By free dispensings of the Churches treasure.
Then in memoriall of his ancient throne
He did surname his palace, *Babylon.*

Yet that he might the better gain all nations,
And make that name good by their transmigrations
From all these places, but at divers times,
He took fine vizards to conceal his crimes.
From *Egypt* Anchorisme and retirednesse,
Learning from *Greece*, from old *Rome* statelinesse;
And blending these he carri'd all men's eyes,
While Truth sat by counting his victories.
Whereby he grew apace and scorn'd to use
Such force as once did captivate the Jews,
But did bewitch and finely work each nation
Into a voluntarie transmigration.
All poste to *Rome*. Princes submit their necks
Either t' his publick foot or private tricks.
It did not fit his gravitie to stirre,
Nor his long journey, nor his gout and furre.
Therefore he sent out able ministers,
Statesmen within, without doores cloisterers,
Who without spear, or sword, or other drumme
Then what was in their tongue, did overcome;
And having conquer'd, did so strangely rule,
That the whole world did seem but the Pope's mule.
As new and old *Rome* did one Empire twist,
So both together are one Antichrist,
Yet with two faces, as their *Janus* was,
Being in this their old crackt looking-glasse.
How deare to me, O God, thy counsels are!
Who may with thee compare?

Thus Sinne triumphs in Western *Babylon*,
Yet not as Sinne, but as Religion.
Of his two thrones he made the latter best,
And to defray his journey from the east.
Old and new *Babylon* are to hell and night
As is the moon and sunne to heav'n and light.
When th' one did set, the other did take place,
Confronting equally the law and grace.
They are hell's land-marks, Satan's double crest,
They are Sinne's nipples, feeding th' east and west.
But as in vice the copie still exceeds
The pattern, but not so in vertuous deeds;
So though Sinne made his latter seat the better,
The latter Church is to the first a debter.
The second Temple could not reach the first,
And the late reformation never durst
Compare with ancient times and purer yeares,
But in the Jews and us deserveth tears.
Nay, it shall ev'ry yeare decrease and fade,
Till such a darknesse do the world invade
At Christ's last coming as his first did finde.
Yet must there such proportions be assign'd
To these diminishings as is between
The spacious world and *Jurie* to be seen.

Religion stands on tip-toe in our land,
Readie to passe to the *American* strand.
When height of malice and prodigious lusts,
Impudent sinning, witchcrafts, and distrusts
(The marks of future bane) shall fill our cup
Unto the brimme and make our measure up;
When *Sein* shall swallow *Tiber*, and the *Thames*
By letting in them both pollutes her streams,
When *Italie* of us shall have her will,
And all her calender of sinnes fulfill;
Whereby one may fortell what sinnes next yeare
Shall both in *France* and *England* domineer;
Then shall Religion to *America* flee.
They have their times of Gospel ev'n as we.
My God, thou dost prepare for them a way
By carrying first their gold from them away;
For gold and grace did never yet agree.
Religion alwaies sides with povertie.
We think we rob them, but we think amisse;
We are more poore, and they more rich by this.
Thou wilt revenge their quarrell, making grace
To pay our debts, and leave our ancient place
To go to them, while that which now their nation
But lends to us shall be our desolation.

Yet as the Church shall thither westward flie,
So Sinne shall trace and dog her instantly.
They have their period also and set times
Both for their vertuous actions and their crimes.
And where of old the Empire and the Arts
Usher'd the Gospel ever in men's hearts,
Spain hath done one; when Arts perform the other,
The Church shall come, and Sinne the Church shall smother.
That when they haue accomplished the round,
And met in th' east their first and ancient sound,
Judgement may meet them both and search them round.
Thus do both lights, as well in Church as Sunne,
Light one another and together runne.
Thus also Sinne and Darknesse follow still
The Church and Sunne with all their power and skill.
But as the Sunne still goes both west and east,
So also did the Church by going west
Still eastward go; because it drew more neare
To time and place where judgement shall appeare.
How deare to me, O God, thy counsels are!
Who may with thee compare?

L'ENVOY

King of glorie, King of peace,
With the one make warre to cease;
With the other blesse thy sheep,
Thee to love, in thee to sleep.
Let not Sinne devoure thy fold,
Bragging that thy bloud is cold,
That thy death is also dead,
While his conquests dayly spread;
That thy flesh hath lost his food,
And thy Crosse is common wood.
Choke him, let him say no more,
But reserve his breath in store,
Till thy conquests and his fall
Make his sighs to use it all,
And then bargain with the winde
To discharge what is behinde.

Blessed be God alone,
Thrice blessed Three in One.

FINIS

THE HOLY COMMUNION

O GRATIOUS Lord, how shall I know
Whether in these gifts thou bee so
As thou art everywhere?
Or rather so as thou alone
Tak'st all the Lodging, leaving none
For thy poore creature there.

First I am sure, whether Bread stay,
Or whether Bread doe fly away,
Concerneth Bread, not mee;
But that both thou and all thy traine
Bee there, to thy truth and my gaine,
Concerneth mee and Thee.

And if in comming to thy foes
Thou dost come first to them, that showes
The hast of thy good will.
Or if that thou two stations makest,
In Bread and mee, the way thou takest
Is more, but for mee still.

Then of this also I am sure,
That thou didst all those pains endure
To abolish Sinn, not Wheat.
Creatures are good and have their place.
Sinn onely, which did all deface,
Thou drivest from his seat.

I could beleeve an Impanation
At the rate of an Incarnation,
    If thou hadst dyde for Bread.
But that which made my soule to dye,
My flesh and fleshly villany,
    That allso made thee dead.

That Flesh is there mine eyes deny.
And what should flesh but flesh discry,
    The noblest sence of five?
If glorious bodies pass the sight,
Shall they be food and strength and might,
    Even there where they deceive?

Into my soule this cannot pass.
Flesh (though exalted) keeps his grass,
    And cannot turn to soule.
Bodyes and Minds are different spheres,
Nor can they change their bounds and meres,
    But keep a constant pole.

This gift of all gifts is the best,
Thy flesh the least that I request.
    Thou took'st that pledge from mee.
Give mee not that I had before,
Or give mee that so I have more.
    My God, give mee all Thee.

LOVE

Thou art too hard for me in Love.
There is no dealing wth thee in that Art.
That is thy Masterpeece, I see.
When I contrive and plott to prove
Something that may be conquest on my part,
Thou still, O Lord, outstrippest mee.

Sometimes, whenas I wash, I say,
And shrodely as I think, Lord wash my soule,
More spotted then my flesh can bee.
But then there comes into my way
Thy ancient baptism, which when I was foule
And knew it not, yet cleansed mee.

I took a time when thou didst sleep,
Great waves of trouble combating my brest;
I thought it brave to praise thee then.
Yet then I found that thou didst creep
Into my hart wth ioye, giving more rest
Then flesh did lend thee back agen.

Let mee but once the conquest have
Vpon the matter, 'twill thy conquest prove.
If Thou subdue mortalitie,
Thou dost no more then doth the grave.
Whereas if I orecome thee and thy Love,
Hell, Death, and Divel come short of mee.

TRINITIE-SUNDAY

He that is one
Is none.
Two reacheth thee
In some degree.
Nature and Grace
With Glory may attaine thy Face.
Steele and a flint strike fire.
Witt and desire
Never to thee aspire
Except life catch and hold those fast.
That which beleefe
Did not confess in the first Theefe
His fall can tell
From Heaven through Earth to Hell.
Lett two of those alone
To them that fall,
Who God and Saints and Angels loose at last.
Hee that has one
Has all.

EVEN-SONG

The Day is spent, and hath his will on mee.
I and the Sunn have runn our races.
I went the slower, yet more paces;
For I decay, not hee.

Lord, make my Losses up, and sett mee free;
That I, who cannot now by day
Look on his daring brightnes, may
Shine then more bright then hee.

If thou deferr this light, then shadow mee;
Least that the Night, earth's gloomy shade,
Fouling her nest, my earth invade,
As if shades knew not thee.

But thou art light and darknes both togeather.
If that bee dark we cannot see,
The sunn is darker than a tree,
And thou more dark then either.

Yet thou art not so dark since I know this
But that my darknes may touch thine,
And hope, that may teach it to shine,
Since Light thy Darknes is.

O lett my soule, whose keyes I must deliver
Into the hands of senceles Dreams
Which know not thee, suck in thy beams
And wake with thee for ever.

THE KNELL

The Bell doth tolle.
Lord, help thy servant whose perplexed soule
Doth wishly look
On either hand,
And sometimes offers, sometimes makes a stand,
Struggling on th' hook.

Now is the season,
Now the great combat of our flesh and reason.
O help, my God!
See, they breake in,
Disbanded humours, sorrows, troops of Sinn,
Each with his rodd.

Lord make thy blood
Convert and colour all the other flood
And streams of grief,
That they may bee
Julips and Cordials when wee call on thee
For some relief.

PERSEVERANCE

My God the poore expressions of my Love,
  Which warme these lines and serve them up to thee
Are so as for the present I did move,
  Or rather as thou movedst mee.

But what shall issue,—whether these my words
  Shall help another but my iudgment bee,
As a burst fouling-peece doth save the birds
  But kill the man,—is seal'd with thee.

For who can tell though thou hast dyde to winn
  And wedd my soule in glorious paradise,
Whether my many crymes and use of sinn
  May yet forbid the banns and bliss?

Onely my soule hangs on thy promisses,
  Wth face and hands clinging unto thy brest;
Clinging and crying, crying without cease,
  Thou art my rock, thou art my rest.

INDEXES

INDEX OF TITLES

Aaron, 218.
Affliction, 128, 180, 350, 351, 352.
Agonie, 287.
To All Angels and Saints, 88.
The Altar, 67.
Anagram, 293.
The Answer, 185.
Antiphon, 57, 242.
Artillerie, 190.
Assurance, 325.
Avarice, 268.

The Bag, 289.
The Banquet, 237.
H. Baptisme, 101, 102.
Bitter-Sweet, 341.
The British Church, 262.
The Bunch of Grapes, 320.
Businesse, 281.

The Call, 217.
Charms and Knots, 113.
Christmas, 90.
Church-Floore, 294.
Church-Lock and Key, 156.
The Church Militant, 400.
Church-Monuments, 106.
Church-Musick, 105.
The Church-Porch, 10.
Church-Rents and Schismes, 264.
Clasping of Hands, 229.
The Collar, 318.
H. Communion, 103, 412.
Complaining, 349.
Confession, 345.
Conscience, 327.
Constancie, 271.
Content, 186.
The Crosse, 328.

The Dawning, 384.
Death, 135.
Decay, 269.
Dedication, xv.
Deniall, 154.
Dialogue, 194.
A Dialogue-Antheme, 388.
The Discharge, 307.
Discipline, 364.
Divinitie, 260.
Dooms-Day, 137.
Dotage, 280.
Dulnesse, 316.

Easter, 83.
Easter Wings, 178.
The Elixer, 53.
Employment, 55, 184.
L'Envoy, 411.
Even-Song, 240, 416.

Faith, 121.
The Familie, 306.
The Flower, 368.
The Foil, 273.
The Forerunners, 376.
Frailtie, 189.

Giddinesse, 276.
The Glance, 383.
The Glimpse, 360.
Good Friday, 81.
Grace, 161.
Gratefulnesse, 231.
Grief, 379.
Grieve not the Holy Spirit, &c., 343.

Heaven, 140.
The Holdfast, 221.
Home, 380.
Hope, 314.
Humilitie, 124.
A True Hymne, 225.

Inscription, 250.
The Invitation, 235.

Jesu, 367.
The Jews, 266.
Jordan, 49, 50.
Joseph's Coat, 366.
Judgement, 139.
Justice, 270, 342.

The Knell, 417.

Lent, 92.
Life, 378.
Longing, 356.
Love, 47, 210, 414.
Love-Joy, 292.
Love Unknown, 333.

Man, 115.
Man's Medley, 274.
Marie Magdalene, 286.
Mattens, 148.
The Method, 312.
Miserie, 129.
Mortification, 133.

Nature, 157.

Obedience, 202.
The Odour, 223.
An Offering, 206.
Our Life is Hid, &c., 147.

Paradise, 230.
A Parodie, 362.
Peace, 198.
The Pearl, 200.
Perseverance, 418.
The Pilgrimage, 330.
The Posie, 226.
Praise, 51, 208, 233.
Prayer, 97, 98.
The Priesthood, 196.
Providence, 251.
The 23 Psalme, 222.
The Pulley, 285.

The Quidditie, 52.
The Quip, 227.

Redemption, 123.
Repentance, 158.
The Reprisall, 152.
The Rose, 204.

The Sacrifice, 68.
Saints, *vide* Angels.
Schismes, *vide* Church-Rents.
H. Scriptures, 99.
The Search, 322.
Self-Condemnation, 267.
Sepulchre, 288.
Sighs and Grones, 354.
Sinne, 119, 120.
The Sinner, 153.
Sinnes Round, 283.
Sion, 348.
The Size, 310.
The Sonne, 291.
Sonnets to his Mother, 45.
The Starre, 192.
The Storm, 347.
Submission, 315.
Sunday, 94.
Superliminare, 66.

The Temper, 162, 163.
The Thanksgiving, 149.
Time, 386.
Trinitie-Sunday, 87, 415.

Ungratefulnesse, 126.
Unkindnesse, 160.

Vanitie, 188, 278.
Vertue, 385.

The Water-Course, 284.
Whitsunday, 85.
The Windows, 220.
The World, 118.
A Wreath, 165.

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

A broken Altar, Lord, thy servant reares, 67.
Ah my deare angrie Lord, 341.
Alas, poore Death, where is thy glorie? 388.
All after pleasures as I rid one day, 90.
Almightie Judge, how shall poore wretches brook, 139.
Almightie Lord, who from thy glorious throne, 400.
And art thou grieved, sweet and sacred Dove, 343.
As he that sees a dark and shadie grove, 101.
As I one ev'ning sat before my cell, 190.
As men, for fear the starres should sleep and nod, 260.
As on a window late I cast mine eye, 292.
Awake sad heart, whom sorrow ever drowns! 384.
Away despair! My gracious Lord doth heare, 289.
A wreathed garland of deserved praise, 165.

Blest be the God of love, 240.
Blest Order, which in power dost so excell, 196.
Brave rose, (alas!) where art thou? In the chair, 264.
Bright spark, shot from a brighter place, 192.
Broken in pieces all asunder, 352.
Busie enquiring heart, what wouldst thou know? 307.
But that Thou art my wisdome, Lord, 315.

Canst be idle? Canst thou play, 281.
Come away, 137.
Come, bring thy gift. If blessings were as slow, 206.
Come Lord, my head doth burn, my heart is sick, 380.
Come, my Way, my Truth, my Life, 217.
Come ye hither all whose taste, 235.
Content thee, greedie heart, 310.

Deare Friend, sit down, the tale is long and sad, 303.
Death, thou wast once an uncouth hideous thing, 135.
Do not beguile my heart, 349.

False glozing pleasures, casks of happinesse, 280.
Full of rebellion, I would die, 157.

Having been tenant long to a rich Lord, 123.
Heark, how the birds do sing, 274.
He that is one, 415.

He that is weary, let him sit, 55.
Holinesse on the head, 218.
How are my foes increasèd, Lord! 410.
How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean, 368.
How should I praise thee, Lord! How should my rymes, 163.
How soon doth man decay! 133.
How sweetly doth My Master sound! My Master, 223.
How well her name an army doth present, 293.

I blesse thee, Lord, because I grow, 230.
I cannot ope mine eyes, 148.
I cannot skill of these thy wayes, 342.
If as a flowre doth spread and die, 184.
If as the windes and waters here below, 347.
If thou chance for to find, 250.
If we could see below, 273.
I gave to Hope a watch of mine; but he, 314.
I have consider'd it, and finde, 152.
I joy, deare Mother, when I view, 262.
I know it is my sinne which locks thine eares, 156.
I know the wayes of learning, both the head, 200.
I made a posie while the day ran by, 378.
Immortall Heat, O let thy greater flame, 48.
Immortall Love, authour of this great frame, 47.
I saw the Vertues sitting hand in hand, 124.
I struck the board, and cry'd, No more, 318.
It cannot be. Where is that mightie joy, 162.
I threatned to observe the strict decree, 221.
I travell'd on, seeing the hill where lay, 330.

Jesu is in my heart, his sacred name, 367.
Joy, I did lock thee up, but some bad man, 320.

Kill me not ev'ry day, 350.
King of Glorie, King of Peace, 208.
King of glorie, King of peace, 411.

Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing, 242.
Let forrain nations of their language boast, 291.
Let wits contest, 226.
Listen, sweet Dove, unto my song, 85.
Lord, how can man preach thy eternall word? 220.
Lord, how couldst thou so much appease, 121.
Lord, how I am all ague when I seek, 153.
Lord, I confesse my sinne is great, 158.
Lord, in my silence how do I despise, 189.

Lord, I will mean and speak thy praise, 233.
Lord, let the Angels praise thy name, 129.
Lord, make me coy and tender to offend, 160.
Lord, my first fruits present themselves to thee, xv.
Lord, thou art mine, and I am thine, 229.
Lord, who createdst man in wealth and store, 178.
Lord, who hast form'd me out of mud, 87.
Lord, with what bountie and rare clemencie, 126.
Lord, with what care hast thou begirt us round! 120.
Lord, with what glorie wast thou serv'd of old, 348.
Love bade me welcome; yet my soul drew back, 210.
Love built a stately house; where Fortune came, 118.

Mark you the floore? That square and speckled stone, 294.
Meeting with Time, slack thing, said I, 386.
Money, thou bane of blisse and sourse of wo, 268.
My comforts drop and melt away like snow, 185.
My God, a verse is not a crown, 52.
My God, if writings may, 202.
My God, I heard this day, 115.
My God, I read this day, 128.
My God the poore expressions of my Love, 418.
My God, where is that antient heat towards thee, 45.
My heart did heave, and there came forth, O God! 351.
My joy, my life, my crown! 225.
My stock lies dead, and no increase, 161.
My words and thoughts do both expresse this notion, 147.

Not in rich furniture or fine array, 103.

O blessed bodie! Whither art thou thrown? 288.
O day most calm, most bright, 94.
O do not use me, 354.
O dreadfull Justice, what a fright and terrour, 270.
Of what an easie quick accesse, 98.
O gratious Lord, how shall I know, 412.
Oh all ye who passe by, whose eyes and minde, 68.
Oh Book! Infinite sweetnesse! Let my heart, 99.
Oh glorious spirits, who after all your bands, 88.
Oh King of grief! A title strange, yet true, 149.
Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine, 100.
Oh, what a thing is man ! How farre from power, 276.
O my chief good, 81.
O sacred Providence, who from end to end, 251.
O spitefull bitter thought! 325.
O that I could a sinne once see! 119.
O what a cunning guest, 345.

O who will give me tears? Come all ye springs, 379.
O who will show me those delights on high, 140.

Peace mutt'ring thoughts, and do not grudge to keep, 186.
Peace pratler, do not lowre! 327.
Philosophers have measur'd mountains, 287.
Poore heart, lament, 312.
Poore nation, whose sweet sap and juice, 266.
Poore silly soul, whose hope and head lies low, 188.
Praised be the God of love, 57.
Prayer the Churches banquet, Angel's age, 97.
Presse me not to take more pleasure, 204.

Rise, heart, thy Lord is risen. Sing his praise, 83.

Since, Lord, to thee, 102.
Sorrie I am, my God, sorrie I am, 283.
Soul's joy, when thou art gone, 362.
Sure, Lord, there is enough in thee to dry, 46.
Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright, 385.
Sweetest of sweets, I thank you! When displeasure, 105.
Sweetest Saviour, if my soul, 194.
Sweet Peace, where dost thou dwell? I humbly crave, 198.
Sweet were the dayes when thou didst lodge with Lot, 269.

Teach me, my God and King, 53.
The Bell doth tolle, 417.
The Day is spent, and hath his will on mee, 416.
The fleet Astronomer can bore, 278.
The God of love my shepherd is, 222.
The harbingers are come. See, see their mark! 376.
The merrie world did on a day, 227.
Thou art too hard for me in Love, 414.
Thou that hast giv'n so much to me, 231.
Thou who condemnest Jewish hate, 267.
Thou who dost dwell and linger here below, 284.
Thou, whom the former precepts have, 66.
Thou whose sweet youth and early hopes inhance, 10.
Throw away thy rod, 364.
To write a verse or two is all the praise, 51.

Welcome, deare feast of Lent! Who loves not thee, 92.
Welcome sweet and sacred cheer, 237.
What doth this noise of thoughts within my heart, 306.
What is this strange and uncouth thing! 328.
When blessed Marie wip'd her Saviour's feet, 286.
When first my lines of heav'nly joyes made mention, 50.

When first thou didst entice to thee my heart, 180.
When first thy sweet and gracious eye, 383.
When God at first made man, 285.
When my devotions could not pierce, 154.
While that my soul repairs to her devotion, 106.
Whither away delight? 360.
Whither, O, whither art thou fled, 322.
Who is the honest man, 271.
Who reade a chapter when they rise, 113.
Who says that fictions onely and false hair, 49.
Why do I languish thus, drooping and dull, 316.
With sick and famisht eyes, 356.
Wounded I sing, tormented I indite, 366.

The Riverside Press
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